



"Vlad Has A Few Issues" © 2002-04 Dan Shive



IF YOU BROUGHT COFFEE, I DON'T WANT IT!

COFFEE? DO YOU SEE COFFEE? WHY WOULD I BRING YOU COFFEE?



"The Force That Drove Hedge"

NEVER MIND.
...WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH DAMIEN? WHAT THE HELL IS HE?



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I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE IS. YEARS AGO, WE WERE ALL KEPT IN THIS PLACE. THEN DAMIEN SHOWED UP, KILLED EVERYBODY ELSE THAT WAS HERE, AND FORCED US INTO SERVITUDE.



"IF SOMEONE WAS OUT OF OUR EYESIGHT, HE BROUGHT THEM IN FRONT OF OUR CELLS BEFORE KILLING THEM. HE WANTED US TO FEAR HIM FROM THE START..."



"HE DOESN'T BELIEVE THAT WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LIKE US. HE WANTS TO LOCATE OTHER PLACES LIKE THIS TO FIND OUR "COUSINS". THAT'S WHY I TOOK INTEREST IN YOU AFTER I FIRST MISTOOK YOU FOR GRACE FROM A DISTANCE."



"HE SAID HE'D KILL ME IF I CAME BACK EMPTY HANDED AFTER LOOKING FOR GRACE, AND THAT HE'D LEAVE A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION IF HE HAD TO HUNT ME DOWN."



...DARE I ASK WHY HE WAS MAD THAT YOU DIDN'T BRING BACK A WOMAN?




IF HE CAN'T FIND MORE OF US, HE'LL BREED MORE. THAT'S THE ONLY REASON HE CARES ABOUT MY SISTER.







HE WANTS GRACE FOR
BREEDING?!




AS HIS OWN PERSONAL
MATE, UNLESS HE CAN
FIND SOMEONE "BETTER"
WHO ISN'T HUMAN.



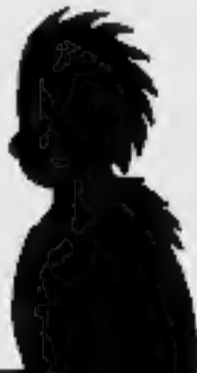
THAT'S
SICK!




DAMIEN IS SICK. HE BELIEVES
HIMSELF TO BE IMMORTAL, WHICH
IS WHY HE'S WILLING TO WAIT
GENERATIONS FOR AN ARMY.



FOR WORLD CONQUEST
AND THE EVENTUAL
ERADICATION OF THE
HUMAN RACE AS WE
KNOW IT?




YES, THAT'S
ABOUT THE
GIST OF IT.




NOW THAT
I'VE ANSWERED
THAT... CAN
YOU TELL ME
HOW GRACE HAS
BEEN DOING?

"Many Cats Out
of One Bag"
© 2004 Dan Shive



GRACE? WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK I KNOW
A GRACE?



WELL, FOR
STARTERS, YOU
APPARENTLY
KNOW THAT SHE'S
MY SISTER...



I HEAR
SOMEONE
COMING...



HEDGE? WHY
ARE YOU HERE?!

VLAD
SAID---



VLAD ISN'T
YOUR MASTER,
I AM! AND I
WANT GUINEAS
GUARDING CAT!

"Conversation Cut Short" ©2004 Dan Shive



WH-WHAT
SHALL I
DO IN THE
MEANTIME?

STAND GUARD BY
THE OTHER PRISONER,
BUT STAY OUTSIDE BY
THE ENTRANCE. I DON'T
WANT YOU TAINTED
BY HIS LIES.



ANOTHER
PRISONER...?



PAINTED BLACK, PART IV

INTO THE DUNGEON





"Haunted Grace" © 2004 Dan Shive



...I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW...

I'M NOT SURE WHAT I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT GUINEAS... HE JUST SORTA RUNS AROUND AND HITS THINGS WILDLY.



HEDGE PUNCHES AND KICKS AND STUFF, BUT HE ALSO USES A CHAIN HE USED TO BE RESTRAINED WITH AS A WHIP-ISHY WEAPON.



VLAD'S SORTA A BATTY GUY, SO HE CAN FLY, AND HE HAS RAZOR TEETH. HE MIGHT YELL LOUDLY AND TRY TO BITE YOU!



WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE DOING BACK THERE TO MAKE THE CAR SHAKE, PLEASE STOP IT. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT DAMIEN?



DAMIEN HEATS UP AND CAN BURN THINGS ON CONTACT. IF HE FIGHTS, YOU GUYS GOTTA RUN.



WE'VE GOTTA RUN? WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO?

HOLD HIM OFF. MY SQUIRREL FUR IS VERY HEAT RESISTANT, AND I HEAL FAST, SO--



WAIT-WAIT-WAIT-- YOU'RE FIREPROOF?



NO, NO... JUST MY FUR. I AM A SQUIRREL, AFTER ALL.

SQUIRREL FUR ISN'T FIREPROOF!

HOW DO YOU FIGURE?





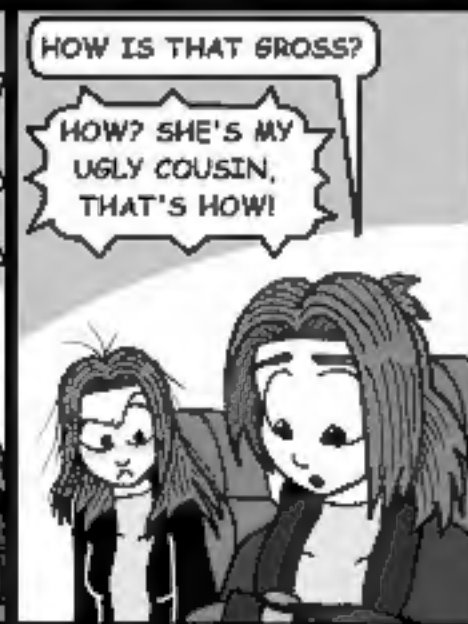
WELL, THIS IS AS FAR AS THE CAR GOES. TEDD? TEDD, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

YEAH.

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED WITH YOU CONTACTING YOUR DAD?



NANASE'S NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO MOVE AROUND TO KEEP HERSELF WARM, AND IT'LL BE COLD FOR YOU TOO, SO YOU MAY WANT TO CUDDLE WITH HER FOR MUTUAL WARMTH.



HOW IS THAT GROSS?

HOW? SHE'S MY UGLY COUSIN, THAT'S HOW!



I'M AFRAID NOT, SO OPERATION "ZELDA" IS STILL A GO.

"Watch Communications" © 2004 Dan Shive



ELLEN? I KNOW HOW GROSS THIS WILL BE, BUT IT'S GOING TO GET COLD SITTING IN THAT CAR.

...AND...?



WHAT THE--? IS SHE USING THE FAIRY DOLL SPELL...?

THE DOLL SHE MADE CONNECTED TO ME IS STILL A DOLL...



*** SMACK ***

OW! NANASE?!

DON'T CALL ME UGLY!

IT IS LOGICAL FOR GRACE TO GO ALONE INITIALLY. SHE'S BEEN THERE BEFORE, SHE CAN MOVE SILENTLY, AND SHE'S IN THE LEAST DANGER IF CAPTURED.



"Through The Woods" © 2004 Dan Shive

TWO MINDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE, HOWEVER, SO NANASE WILL USE HER FAIRY DOLL SPELL TO ACCOMPANY GRACE.



WHY DON'T YOU USE YOUR FAIRY DOLL SPELL TO CONTACT ELLIOT?



TO USE THE SPELL, I NEED TO KNOW THE PERSON AND THE AREA AROUND THEM.

WHICH IS HOW YOU MADE A DOLL APPEAR BACK HOME JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO.



RIGHT: I KNOW TEDD, AND I'VE BEEN TO HIS HOUSE. I KNOW ELLIOT, BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN OUT HERE

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF NAVIGATION, DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?

YEAH, THE SQUIRRELS ARE GUIDING ME TO THE ENTRANCE.



...WE'RE FOLLOWING SQUIRRELS?!

YEAH, I CAN COMMUNICATE WITH ANIMALS. WE ALL CAN, EXCEPT FOR DAMIEN.



SO THAT'S WHY YOU STOPPED TO CHATTER WITH THAT ONE SQUIRREL...



MEANWHILE...

OH, TO BE HERE UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES...



WE GOT
DIRECTIONS
TO THIS OFF OF
AN INTERNET
SEARCH?

IT'S A HOLE
IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE WOODS!

TO BE FAIR,
IT'S A STAIR-
WELL

IT STILL
WOULDN'T HAVE
AN ADDRESS

THE ADDRESS WAS FOR THE
BUILDING WHERE THEY DID LEGAL
STUFF. THE ILLEGAL EVIL STUFF WENT
ON IN SECRET UNDERGROUND.

"A Hole in the Woods" © 2004 Dan Shive

DAMIEN GOT US OUT THIS
WAY WHEN HE CAME FOR US. THIS
WILL TAKE US INTO TUNNELS THAT
SHOULD GET US TO ELLIOT

LOOKS LIKE TEDD'S
DAD DID A BANG-UP
JOB SEALING THIS
PLACE UP

LET'S SEE
WHAT'S THE BEST WAY
TO GET THROUGH THIS
BARRICADE

HISSSSS...



SNATCH!



LIFT!



EEP

WOBBLE
WOBBLE



MEREOW?



THAT CAME
OFF TOO
EASILY



YOUR BROTHERS
PROBABLY PULLED
IT OFF EARLIER



EXIT



YOU'RE SURE
OF THE WAY?

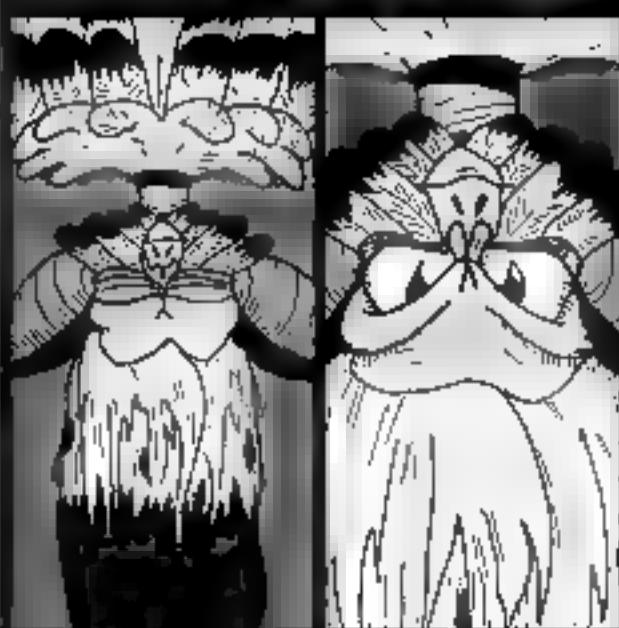
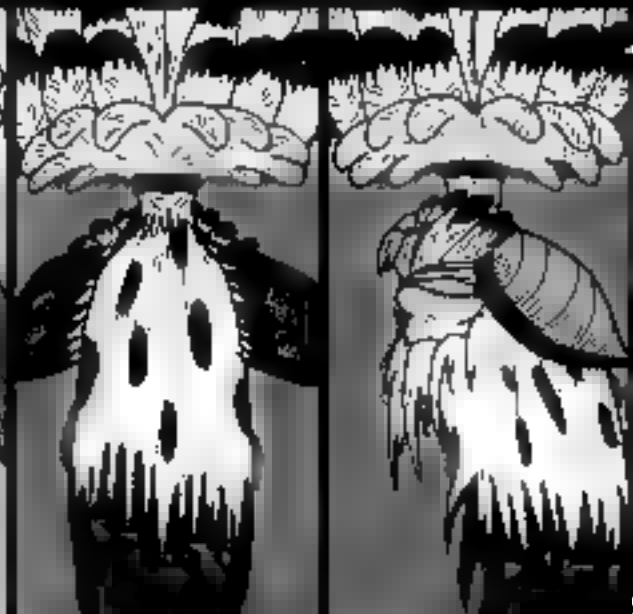


I'M PRETTY SURE THIS
IS THE WAY DAMIEN
LED US THE LAST--



--TIME







"Worse Evolves to All Sorts of 'Bad'" • 2004 Den Shive







YOU APPEAR
UPSET

YOU DON'T LIKE
THAT I HIT HER?



I NEVER LIKE TO
SEE HER HURT



BUT SHE BROUGHT
IT UPON HERSELF

HMPH THAT S WHY I LIKE
YOU VLAD YOU NEVER MAKE
ME HAVE TO HIT YOU



END PART IV

PAINTED BLACK

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PAINTED BLACK, PART V

THE TRUTH ABOUT GRACE



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YO SQUIRREL I'M TRYING TO FIND A BIG HOLE IN THE GROUND YOU SEEN ONE?



PUNK



WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?



A SQUIRREL LEAD US TO THE HOLE THE FIRST TIME

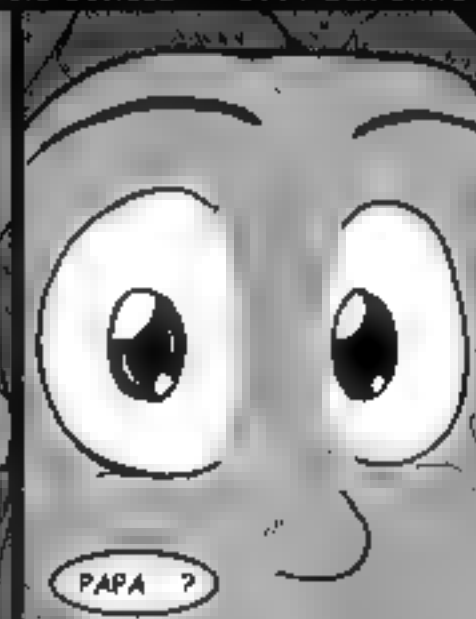
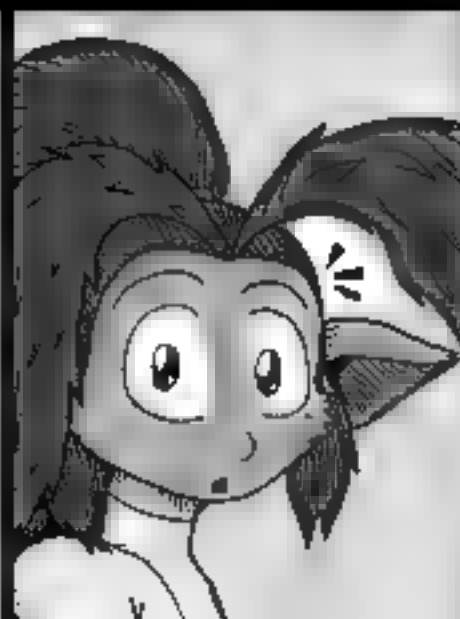
AH I GUESS THAT WAS WORTH A TRY



BUT I DON'T THINK SQUIRRELS ARE GOING TO BE OF MUCH HELP WITHOUT GRACE HERE



WELL, WHEN WE DO FIND OUR WAY BACK IN VLAD IS MINE



I REMEMBER HIM.



HE WAS ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS
THE FIRST PERSON TO CALL ME "GRACE"



HE WAS GONE YEARS
BEFORE DAMIEN



"The Scientist Who Missed Damien" © 2004 Dan Shive

W WHY IS HE HERE?



I CAPTURED HIM WITH THE HOPES
THAT HE COULD CONSULT US ON
THE MATTER OF FINDING MORE
PEOPLE LIKE YOU GRACE HE HASN'T
BEEN MUCH HELP
WITH THAT BUT
WHAT HE HAS
TOLD ME IS MOST
INTERESTING
I "ASK" THAT
HE SHARE IT ALL
AGAIN NOW



IT WILL BE A GOOD WAY
TO PASS THE TIME WHILE
WE WAIT FOR YOUR
FRIENDS TO GET HERE



WHAT FRIENDS?!
WHAT ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT?!
I CAME ALONE!



AND I
SUPPOSE
YOU MADE
THAT URYUOM
WORKER'S
UNIFORM
YOURSELF?
IT'S OBVIOUS
THAT YOU'RE
NOT ACTING
ALONE



PLEASE DON'T
MAKE ME TELL HER.
SHE DOESN'T NEED
TO KNOW



"A Sickening Threat" • 2004 Don Shive

AH, BUT THIS
TRUTH IS MY GIFT
TO HER! SHE HAS
EVERY RIGHT TO
KNOW WHAT SHE IS



BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT
TO SHARE I UNDERSTAND.
THERE ARE OTHER WAYS
TO PASS THE TIME



OK. I'LL TALK!
JUST TAKE
YOUR HANDS
OFF OF HER!



I HAD A FEELING
YOU WOULD

MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST
DIG A NEW HOLE

I HAVE A
BETTER IDEA



I'VE BEEN IN PART OF THAT
BASE NOW, SO IF GRACE IS
CLOSE ENOUGH TO WHERE I
WAS BEFORE I SHOULD BE
ABLE TO MAKE A NEW FAIRY
DOLL APPEAR.



I CAN THEN FIND MY WAY
BACK TO MY OWN BODY
WHICH WILL BE EASY TO
FIND BECAUSE IT GLOWS
WHILE I'M IN FAIRY FORM
THEN WE JUST FOLLOW
THE GLITTER!



GLITTER?



WHEW! THAT SEEMED
HARDER THAN NORMAL.
SHE MUST BARELY BE
CLOSE ENOUGH



POP

FAIRY WING



GLITTER!!!

SPARKLE



IT'S HARD TO LOOK
BAD-ASS WHEN USING
FAIRY POWERS



"SIGH"

"Bad-Ass Fairy Powers"

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MANY YEARS AGO MY COLLEAGUES
AND I WERE ASSIGNED TO WORK
ON A PROJECT TO CREATE DEADLY
SUPER ASSASSINS



WHAT KIND OF COMPANY WOULD
ASSIGN THAT?

A SHADY ONE

KIL



"WE EVENTUALLY CAME ACROSS A
WAY TO CREATE THE ASSASSINS
BUT IT WOULD REQUIRE US TO
WAIT FOR THEM TO GROW UP
SO WE NEEDED TO FIND A WAY
TO SPEED UP DEVELOPMENT "

MILK HELPS KIDS
GROW RIGHT?



"It's All So Perfectly Logical" • 2004 Dan Shive

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST TRAIN
NORMAL PEOPLE TO BE ASSASSINS?

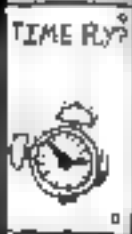
ACCORDING TO MARKETING
THE ASSASSIN MARKET WAS
SATURATED WE NEEDED A
GIMMICK TO STAND OUT

"FOR A TIME I GAVE UP ON THE WHOLE
THING A FEW OF MY COLLEAGUES
HOWEVER, DEvised A HYPOTHESIS
ABOUT HOW WE COULD SPEED UP THE
AGING PROCESS THE HYPOTHESIS WAS
BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS, OTHER
HYPOTHESSES, AND SEVERAL EPISODES
OF 'STAR TREK' IT WAS WORTHLESS "

"I ATTEMPTED TO MAKE MY
SUPERIORS UNDERSTAND THAT
IT PROBABLY WOULDN'T WORK.
BUT MY EFFORTS WERE FUTILE "

IT WILL
NEVER EVER
WORK EVER

SURE IT WILL! NOW
START BREEDING THOSE
ASSASSINS!



WAIT DOES THIS
MEAN THAT MY BROTHERS
AND I ARE AGING AT AN
ACCELERATED RATE?



NO I WAS RIGHT ABOUT IT
NOT WORKING IF ANYTHING
YOU AGE SLOWER THAN MOST
PEOPLE YOU LOOK MORE LIKE
A 16 YEAR OLD THAN SOME
ONE WHO'S GOING TO TURN
18 NEXT SATURDAY



MY BIRTHDAY IS NEXT
SATURDAY? I'M GOING
TO BE 18? THAT WOULD
MAKE ME OLDER THAN--



UM PEOPLE
WHO ARE YOUNGER
THAN ME



"Grace's 'I'm Shocked' Face Gets Overtime" © 2004 Dan Shive

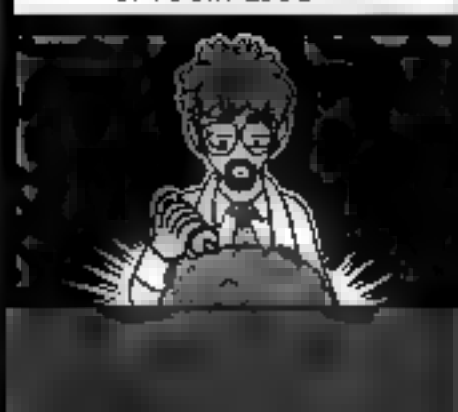
WHO CARES HOW OLD
SHE IS? GET BACK TO
THE STORY OLD MAN.



"IN SPITE OF HOW ILLOGICAL
IT WAS, WE STARTED TO
DESIGN YOUR BROTHERS. WE
DETERMINED THAT ONE
WOULD HAVE AN EVEN DNA
MIX, THE NEXT WOULD HAVE
MORE HUMAN DNA THAN
ANIMAL. AND THE THIRD
WOULD HAVE A WIDE RANGE
OF DNA SOURCES "



"WE GATHERED WHAT DNA
SOURCES WE HAD THAT
WERE AVAILABLE AND BEGAN
INJECTING THEM INTO
URYUOM EGGS "



WE WERE BORN
FROM JRYUOM EGGS?
WE'RE PART URYUOM?

NOT
QUITE



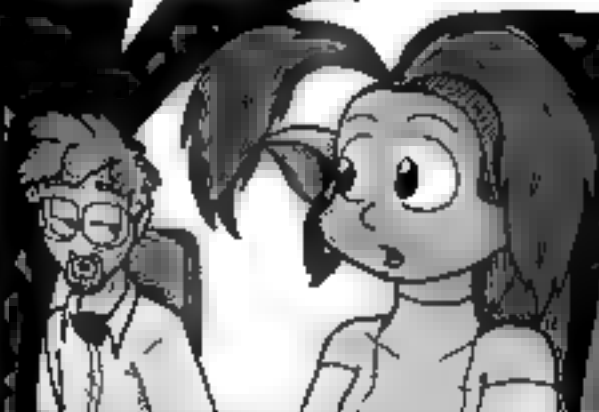
WHEN A URYUOM EGG IS USED TO HOUSE MULTIPLE DNA SOURCES. THE RESULTING CHILD IS A 'SEYUNOLU' WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES TO 'CHIMERA' IN ENGLISH. IF NO URYUOM DNA IS IN THE EGG THE RESULTING CHILD WILL HAVE SOME CHARACTERISTICS SIMILAR TO A URYUOM BUT WON'T TRULY BE URYUOM. A LACK OF URYUOM DNA IN THE FERTILIZED EGG RESULTS IN A 'ROAISOL SEYUNOLU', OR LESSER CHIMERA. AN EGG WITH SOME URYUOM DNA RESULTS IN A 'TULOUGOL SEYUNOLU' OR 'GREATER CHIMERA'

ARE YOU SAYING THAT MY BROTHERS AND I ARE LESSER CHIMERAS?

TWO OF YOUR BROTHERS ARE



"Ingredients" © 2004 Dan Shive



"GUINEAS WAS CREATED WITH AN EGG THAT HAD 50% GUINEA PIG DNA, AND 50% HUMAN DNA. HEDGE WAS CREATED WITH 25% HEDGEHOG DNA, AND 75% HUMAN. THEY ARE BOTH LESSER CHIMERAS "

"VLAD HAD DNA SOURCES THAT INCLUDED SEVERAL BATS, OWLS, HAWKS, AND EVEN LEOPARD DNA IN ADDITION TO HUMAN AND URYUOM DNA. WE THOUGHT THE URYUOM DNA WOULD BE ENOUGH TO MAKE HIS TRANSFORMATIONS STABLE. BUT HE ALMOST KILLED HIMSELF THE ONE TIME HE TRIED TO BECOME HUMAN."





THERE I AM!



MA'AM, ARE
YOU AWARE THAT
YOU'RE SHEDDING
GLITTER?

DUH!
NOW HOLD
ME!



"Nanase Locates Herself"

© 2004 Dan Shive



NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS
FOLLOW THE GLITTER RESCUE
ELLIOT AND GRACE



AND KICK THE ASSES
OF ANYONE STUPID ENOUGH
TO STAND IN OUR WAY!



CAN I HAVE MY DOLLY? I'D LIKE
TO HANG ONTO IT!

HERE
YA GO

THANKS!

A GREATER
CHIMERA?

IT CAN'T
BE THAT
SIMPLE

THERE MUST BE
MORE TO SHADE TAIL
THAN THAT

YOU MADE ALL OF MY
BROTHERS AT THE SAME
TIME? THAT DOESN'T
SOUND RIGHT

YOU PROBABLY WOUND UP
HEARING THE VERSION OF
THE STORY THAT WE TELL
PEOPLE WHO AREN'T IN "THE
NEED TO KNOW" WHICH
WOULD EXPLAIN WHY YOU
KNEW NOTHING OF YOUR
URYUOM HERITAGE

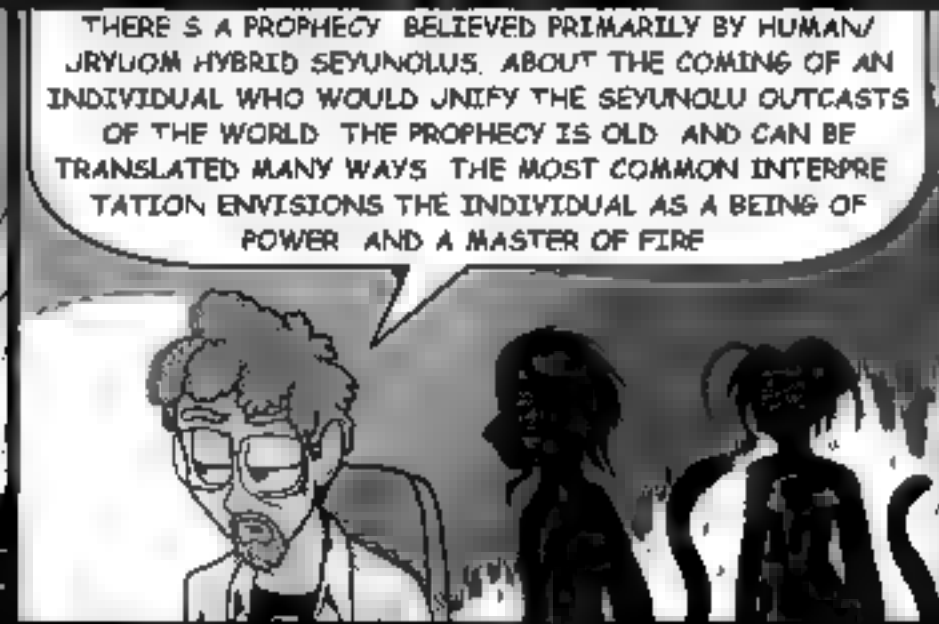
BUT WHY AM I HERE? YOU
SAID YOU COULDN'T GET THE
AGE THING TO WORK RIGHT
AND YOU ALREADY HAD THREE
KIDS TO DEAL WITH.

WHY WAS I BORN?!

BECAUSE
OF ME

YOU WERE BORN TO KILL ME!

"The Purpose of Grace" © 2004 Dan Shive



I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT
I HAVE A STRONG FEELING
THAT NOW MIGHT BE A
GOOD TIME TO TRY TO
ESCAPE, BUT SHOULD I
GO FOR IT ?



REMEMBER! ALWAYS LISTEN
TO RANDOM INTUITION! IT
JUST MIGHT BE THE
CONVENIENT PLOT DEVICE
THAT SAVES YOUR BUTT!



ONCE AGAIN A
FLASHBACK SHOWS
ME THE WAY



I DON'T EVEN KNOW
IF I CAN DO THIS,
BUT IF I CAN



"Elliot Loosens Up" © 2004 Dan Shive



I DID IT! I MADE
MYSELF MORPH A5
IF I'D BEEN HIT
WITH FEMALE
VARIANT #5
AND NOW THE
ROPES ARE REALLY
LOOSE!



AS ARE
MY PANTS



CRAP! THE WAY MY HANDS
ARE TIED I HAVE TO
SQUIRM TO GET THEM
FREE. AND MY PANTS
ARE REALLY LOOSE!



CRAP! THE ROPES AROUND
MY WAIST HAVE FALLEN.
PUSHING DOWN MY PANTS
AND UNDERWEAR! ON THE
PLUS SIDE, MY HANDS ARE
NOW FREE!



CRAP! I'LL HAVE TO
STEP OUT OF MY SHOES.
CLOTHES. AND OVER THE
ROPES TO GET FREE AND
THEN REDRESS!



OK CLOTHES ON,
MORPHING BACK TO
NORMAL ATTEMPTING
TO IGNORE HOW TIRING
TRANSFORMING ON MY
OWN IS



"Worst. Directing. EVER!" © 2004 Dan Shive

I FEEL LIKE I JUST
RAN A MARATHON AND
I HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED
RUNNING YET HOW DOES
GRACE DO IT?



I DON'T THINK I CAN
FIGHT WELL LIKE THIS.
I'LL SLIP OUT THROUGH
THAT OTHER EXIT
OVER THERE!



ADDRESSING THE RUMORS OF WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY RESULT IN DAMIEN BECAME THE PRIORITY OF THE LAB DUE TO THE PROPHECY INVOLVING UNIFYING SEYUNOLUS AND YOUR BROTHERS BEING SEYUNOLUS, MY COLLEAGUES BELIEVED WE WERE AT RISK I DIDN'T THINK WE SHOULD CONCERN OURSELVES WITH RUMORS. BUT MY COLLEAGUES IGNORED ME I SUPPOSE THEY WERE RIGHT TO DO SO

"THE BASIC PLAN OF ACTION WAS TO CREATE A SEYUNOLU WE WOULDN'T OTHERWISE CREATE DUE TO THE RISK OF CREATING SOMETHING WE COULDN'T CONTROL THE DNA SOURCES WERE TO INCLUDE A NATURALLY STRONG HUMAN DONOR A SQUIRREL SO AS TO PASS THE SEYUNOLU OFF AS BEING LIKE YOUR BROTHERS. A URYUOM DONOR AND A LESPUKO "

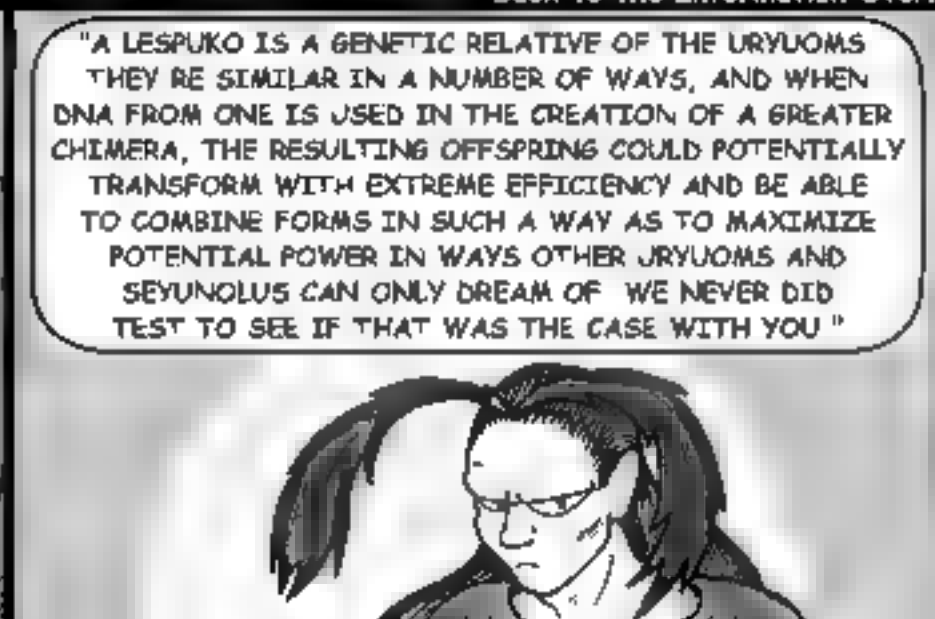


"Back to the Information Overload" © 2004 Dan Shive

A LESPUKO? OK. GREAT THAT MAKES FOUR PARENTS. AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT ONE OF THEM IS!

"A LESPUKO IS A GENETIC RELATIVE OF THE URYUOMS THEY'RE SIMILAR IN A NUMBER OF WAYS, AND WHEN DNA FROM ONE IS USED IN THE CREATION OF A GREATER CHIMERA, THE RESULTING OFFSPRING COULD POTENTIALLY TRANSFORM WITH EXTREME EFFICIENCY AND BE ABLE TO COMBINE FORMS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL POWER IN WAYS OTHER URYUOMS AND SEYUNOLUS CAN ONLY DREAM OF WE NEVER DID TEST TO SEE IF THAT WAS THE CASE WITH YOU "

I'M PRETTY SURE IT IS



LESPUKO? I DIDN'T SEE ANY PHYSICAL SIGNS OF THAT WITH HER! NOR DO I SEE ANY SIGNS IN GENERAL SHADE TAIL!



BUT MAYBE THAT'S THE POINT IT MAY NEED TO BE PASSIVE



I HATED THIS COMPANY BUT WORKING HERE WAS WORTH IT BACK THEN.



MY WIFE DIED MANY YEARS EARLIER. ALL I HAD LEFT WAS MY DAUGHTER. I NEEDED MONEY TO PROVIDE FOR HER. TO GIVE HER A FUTURE

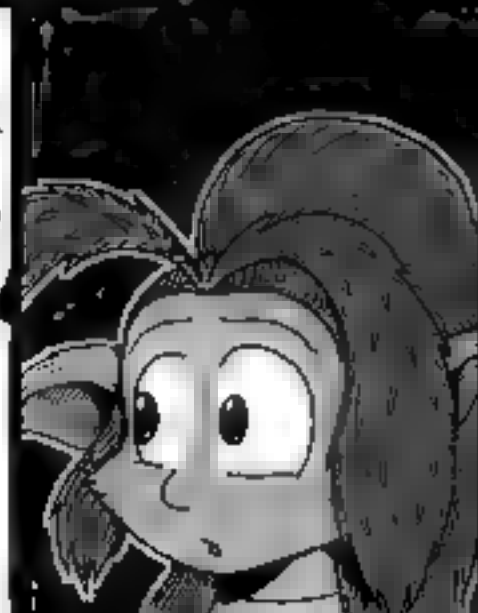


"I Guess Grace Didn't Die in that 'Dimension' - Mr. Verres, 01/06/2003" © 2004 Dan Shive

BUT SHE DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT



I COULDN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF LOSING HER I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE RUMORS OF DAMIEN I JUST WANTED MY DAUGHTER BACK SO I USED HER BLOOD IN PLACE OF THE INTENDED HUMAN DONOR



THE OTHER SCIENTISTS
DIDN'T KNOW MY DAUGHTER
HAD DIED AND JUST
ASSUMED THAT THERE HAD
BEEN A MIX-UP OF SOME
SORT



"A Spark" © 2004 Dan Shive

"AROUND THE TIME I
GAVE YOU YOUR HAIR BAND.
THEY STARTED TO SUSPECT
THE TRUTH. AND HAD ME
TRANSFERRED "



"I EVENTUALLY FOUND
MYSELF IN A POSITION
TO SET YOU AND YOUR
BROTHERS FREE WHICH
WOULD HAVE HAPPENED "



IF IT
WASN'T
FOR HIM!



YOU'VE BLATANTLY
SKIPPED THE MOST
IMPORTANT THING
SCIURIDAE

SCIUR-
IDAE?



THE JRYUOM WHO MADE
THE EGGS AND SUPPLIED
THE JRYUOM GENETIC
MATERIAL HAD AN ABNOR-
MALITY THAT ALLOWED HIM
TO CREATE SUITABLE EGGS
WITHOUT A MATE AS SUCH.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT YOU
HAVE THIS
ABNORMALITY
AS WELL!



DUE TO WHO YOUR
FATHER WAS, WE MAY
BE ABLE TO CREATE A
SMALL ARMY OF SEYUN-
OLUS IN A SINGLE
GENERATION!

MY FATHER



SH-SHADE TAIL...

MR GUYUR
WAS MY
FATHER !



MR GUYUR? WHO
IS MR GUYUR?



HE WAS THE ONLY JRYUOM
WHO WORKED HERE! HE HAD
TO OF BEEN MY FATHER. AND
YOU KILLED HIM
RIGHT IN FRONT
OF ME!



I DID? WELL, HAD I
KNOWN HE WAS YOUR
FATHER I WOULD'VE LET
HIM LIVE HE COULD'VE
PROVEN VERY USEFUL



IT'S ALL MY
FAULT I JUST
COWERED IN
THE CORNER !



ARE YOU ACTUALLY ANGRY?
I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN
THAT FROM YOU BEFORE



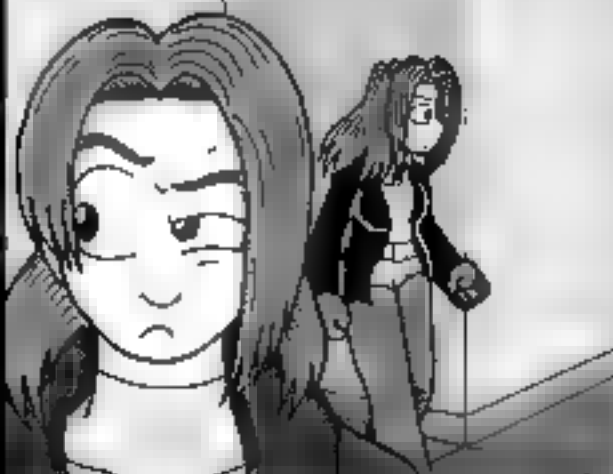
RRRGH--!!!



SKREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE



MINUTES BEFORE "SKREE"



ALRIGHT LET'S TALK
STRATEGY WHO DO WE
RESCUE FIRST ELLIOT
OR GRACE?



HOW SHOULD I KNOW?
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW
WHERE THEY ARE!



CRRAAAP!!!

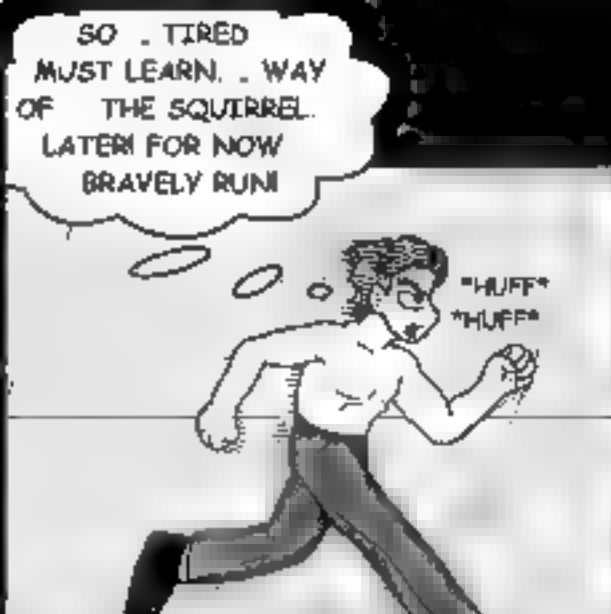


SQUEEEEEEEEEE!!!

WE SHOULD RESCUE ELLIOT FIRST

GOOD
CALL







PAINTED BLACK, PART VI

THE BREWING STORM





IT SEEMS HER FRIENDS HAVE ARRIVED



MAY DEATH BEFALL THE ENEMIES OF DAMIEN!



MONSTER! I OWE YOU FROM BEFORE!

HAVE WE MET?



IDIOTS! DAMIEN MUST KNOW YOU'RE HERE NOW! JUST GIVE UP BEFORE YOU GET YOURSELVES KILLED!

"The Protective Sibling" © 2004 Dan Shive



WHY IS HE LOOKING AT ME?



GEEYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!



CAPTURE IS NOT AN OPTION

HE MAY HAVE WINGS BUT
THOSE AREN'T MADE FOR
INDOOR FLYING MY MAGIC
FLIGHT SHOULD GIVE ME
AN ARIAL ADVANTAGE!



"Feather Antennae Beard"
© 2004 Dan Shive



SO MUCH
FOR THAT
THEORY



STUPID
CAT !

HISS!



WOW CAT FIGHT

SNORT.



SO, I GUESS WE
SHOULD FIGHT EACH
OTHER?

"SHRUG"

A FLYING
REDHEAD

WHAT
ARE YOU
LOOKING
AT?

NONE
OF YOUR
CONCERN

NEVER
AGAIN...

"Motivations and the Lack Thereof" • 2004 Dan Shive

SO GOING ALL
OUT TO STOP ME SO
DAMIEN WON'T HAVE
TO HUH?

DO YOU
FEAR HIM
THAT
MUCH?

HAI NICE TRY FUR-
BALL BUT THIS THUMB
WAR IS MINE!

SHORT

KRREEEAAHH!!!





"Silent Scream"
© 2004 Dan Shive



...AND ALL
EQUILIBRIUM
WAS LOST...





THE ROOM MADE IT DIFFICULT TO HEAR WHAT WAS GOING ON OUTSIDE OF IT, OR TO EVEN SEE UNLESS CLOSE TO THE GLASS AS DAMIEN WAS THE BEAM HOWEVER SHONE FORTH AS A BEACON



NOBODY MOVE! I WON'T HESITATE
TO DO THAT AGAIN, DAMMIT!



"Explosion of Guilt" ©2004 Dan Shive

THIS NO
LONGER AMUSES
ME

EXCUSE ME GRACE
SCIURIDAE IT APPEARS
I'LL HAVE TO KILL THESE
INTRUDERS MYSELF



I WAS DESIGNED TO KILL DAMIEN BUT WHEN HE ATTACKED
I JUST COWERED IN THE CORNER HE KILLED THEM ALL THE
SCIENTISTS. MY FATHER I IT'S ALL MY FAULT!





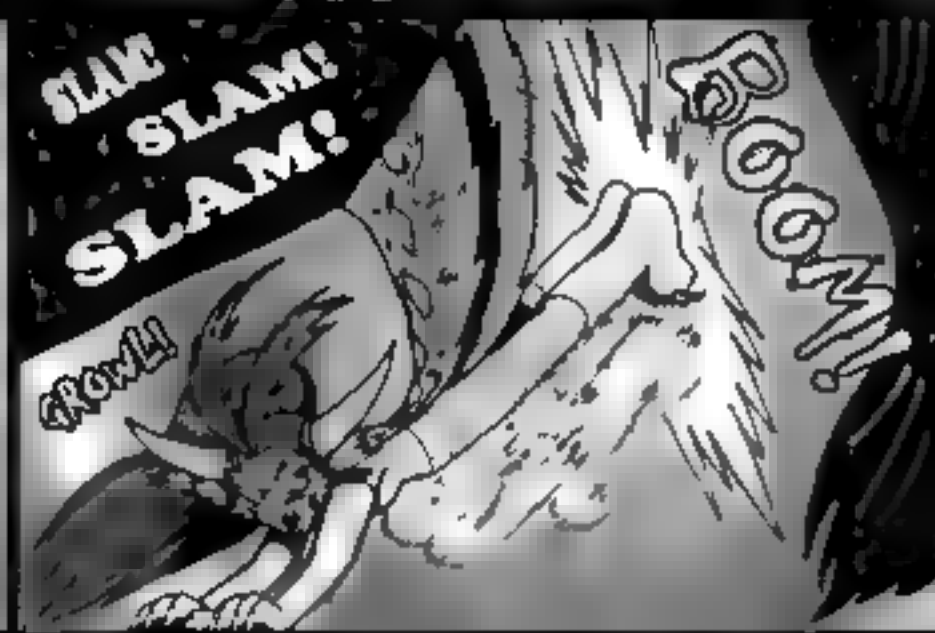
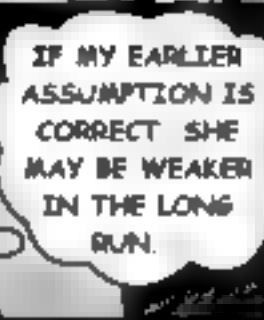


PAINTED BLACK, PART VII



FALLEN FROM GRACE

© 2004 DAN SHIVE







SHE IS FIREPROOF
NANASE!



THIS IS THE
DREADED DAMIEN?
HE MOVES LIKE
AN AMATEUR!



WAIT THAT FIRE COULD
EASILY WIN HIM MOST
FIGHTS. HE CAN REGEN-
ERATE AND HE IS SUPPOSED
TO HAVE SUPER STRENGTH.



HE'S NEVER NEEDED SKILL
BEFORE! HIS FIGHTING STYLE
IS TOTALLY DEPENDANT ON
HIS POWERS!



AWAY WITH
YOU



ANNOYING PEST



WHY HASN'T THIS
WOUND HEALED?





IT'S HEALING
BUT IT'S SLOW!
THAT PEST
ACTUALLY DID
ENOUGH DAMAGE
TO WEAKEN MY

*GRACE HAS DONE MORE DAMAGE
THAN HAS BEEN SEEN "ON PANEL"
ESPECIALLY THE LAST COMIC

WHEN IT CAME TIME
TO TAKE GRACE AND HER
BROTHERS. SOME OF THOSE
WHO SUMMONED ME QUES-
TIONED IF I WAS READY
THEY WERE HEATHENS. SO
I KILLED THEM



THE OTHERS TRIED TO
STOP ME FROM KILLING
THE HEATHENS. THEY
TOO HAD TO DIE. I'M A
GOD! I WAS JUSTIFIED!



BUT IF I'M JUST
SOME MORTAL MADE
IN SOME LAB.

NO.



GROWL!



GYAAHH!!!!



NOOOOOO!



BOOM

"A World Collapsing" ©2004 Dan Shive

DAMIEN RAN AWAY?!



GRR~RR...



THWIP THWIP



SWOOP



GRRR~AAARRR!!!





WHAT?!



PLEASE SURRENDER
I DON'T WANT TO
FIGHT ANYMORE



SURRENDER?



I JUST WANNA GO HOME,
BUT YOU WANT TO DO
VERY BAD THINGS. I CAN'T
LET YOU HURT PEOPLE



YOU WANT ME TO GIVE UP?
WHAT THEN? PUT ME IN A
CAGE AND HOPE I BEHAVE?!



I DON'T KNOW
WHAT THEN



I'VE GONE TOO FAR
TO TURN AROUND



**THIS WILL
END IN DEATH!**



VWOOM



GEEEAHHH!!!



"DODGE"



GRRR-!!!



STOP
PLEASE!



GRRARR!!!

DAMIAN

DIE!

STOP IT!

GEEAH

STOP!



I CAN'T EVEN
TOUCH YOU



STOP IT! YOU'RE BURNING
UP! YOU'RE GONNA KILL
YOURSELF!



IF I AM TRULY A GOD.

THEN THIS BODY
DOESN'T MATTER



IF I'M A MORTAL, LIFE
ISN'T WORTH LIVING

IN EITHER CASE, I AM
TAKING YOU WITH ME

ANYBODY HAVE ANY IDEA
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING
ON UP THERE?!



EH?!



SQUEE!!

WHERE DID
THIS GUY
COME FROM?!



"Nearing the End" © 2004 Dan Shive



SO--HOT! IS
HE GONNA BLOW
HIMSELF UP?!



THERE'S NO
SAVING HIM, IS
THERE?



I'M
SORRY
DAMIEN!





NO ESCAPE!



GRRRAHH!

FWOOSH



WHOOSH

CRACKLE



R-R-RUMMMBLE

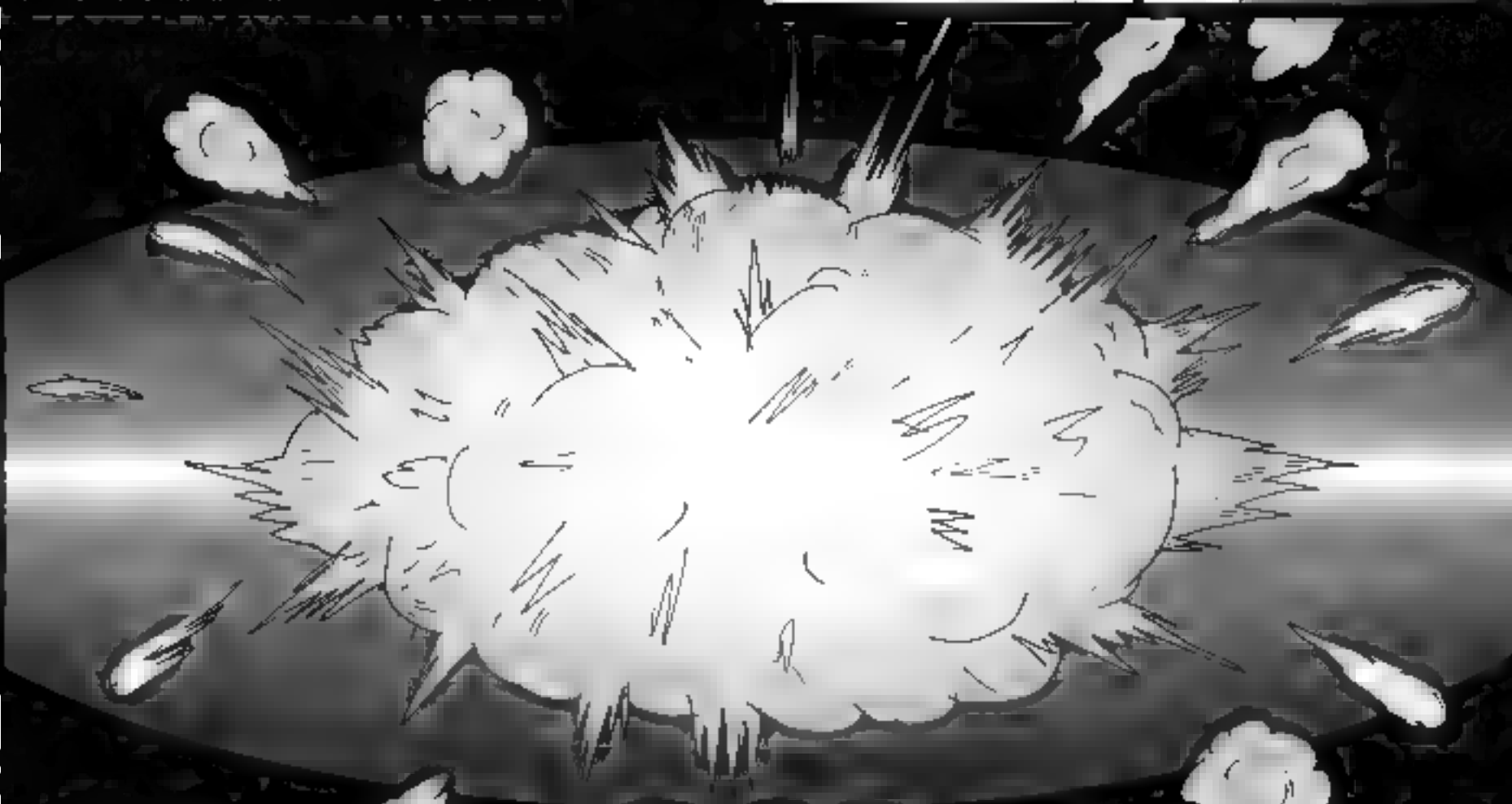


COME WITH ME...



I LOVE YOU TEDDI!

"Grace VS Damien Climax" © 2004 Dan Slive



KERSHOOM





PAINTED BLACK

PART VIII

HUMANITY

© 2004 Dan Shive





DAMIEN'S DEAD?!

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ELLEN?!



SNORT?!

YOU ARE A RESULT OF THE DEWITCHERY DIAMOND, ARE YOU NOT?

HOW DID--



"Weird Giant Diamond Expert?"

WHEN A "CURSE" IS REMOVED BY THE DIAMOND, THE CURSED PERSON APPEARS TO RETURN TO NORMAL, AND A DUPLICATE OF THAT PERSON IS CREATED IN THE LIKENESS OF THE ORIGINAL AS THEY WERE WHEN CURSED. THE ORIGINAL, WHO I ASSUME IS THE CAT, OBTAINS THE ABILITY TO REASSUME A FACSIMILE OF THE TRANSFORMED STATE WHILE THE DUPLICATE IS GIVEN THE MEANS TO SPREAD THE CURSE, WHICH CAN VARY DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE CURSE.



NOW, BEFORE YOU ASK "BUT HOW CAN I BECOME A KITTY", I ASSUME YOU WERE TRANSFORMED AGAIN WITHIN A FEW HOURS OF CONTACT WITH THE DIAMOND?

MEOW



FOR A FEW HOURS AFTER CONTACT, MORE FORMS CAN BE ADDED TO THE ORIGINAL'S ABILITY TO TRANSFORM AND CAN ALSO BE ADDED TO THE DUPLICATE'S ABILITY TO SPREAD FORMS. THE ORIGINAL GAINING A FORM DOES NOT GRANT THE DUPLICATE A NEW FORM, AND VICE VERSA.

I THINK THAT ANSWERS A LOT OF QUESTIONS, BUT HOW DOES ALL THAT END WITH ME NEEDING YOUR HELP?



WHEN YOU WERE CREATED YOU WERE GIVEN A SOUL, COMPLETELY NEW AND NOT A REINCARNATION.

A SOUL SHOULD ALWAYS BE OF EQUAL OR GREATER AGE THAN THE BODY IT INHABITS. AND YOU HAVE A NEWBORN SOUL IN THE EQUIVALENT OF A 17-YEAR OLD BODY.



WAIT A MINUTE-- MY SOUL?
THIS IS A RELIGIOUS THING?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA IF ANY
OF THAT SOUL STUFF IS
ACCURATE DO YOU?



"Hints for the Future" © 2004 Dan Shive

IT SEEMS ACCURATE

"SEEMS
ACCURATE"?



IN ANY CASE YOU DON'T
HAVE YOUR OWN MEMORIES
OF CHILDHOOD. AND IT'S
THE SAME WITH MY--



THEY'RE
ALMOST
HERE



LISTEN, WHAT I WOULD
LIKE TO DO WON'T HARM
OR TRANSFORM YOU IN ANY
WAY THERE'S NOTHING TO
LOSE, AND EVERYTHING
TO GAIN PLEASE?



WELL, IT
SOUNDS
GOOD,
BUT

GREAT!

"MAGIC
NOSE
BEEPER"



THE
HELL?

THANK YOU
ELLEN, THIS
SHOULD BE GOOD
FOR BOTH OF YOU!



WSSSSHHH

GOTTA GO! HAVE
GOOD DREAMS!

HEY WAIT
A SECOND!!



DID SHE
JUST "BEEP"
YOUR NOSE?

WHAT
AM I A
BEAGLE?!



UNH... WHAT...
I'M IN PAIN...

MY BODY ACHES... I
HAVEN'T FELT ANY PAIN
IN OVER A DECADE...

WHAT DID THAT
HUMAN DO TO ME...?

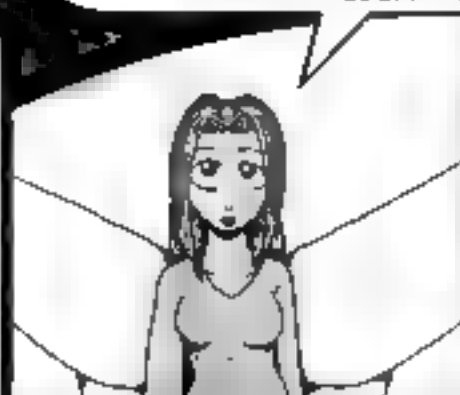




NANASE?!
BUT . BUT WHEN.
AND WHY ISN'T YOUR
BODY GLOWING
ZA?!



AFTER VLAD SCREAMED AT ME I FELT MYSELF LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS I WAS AFRAID
I WAS GOING TO WIND UP BREAKING MY NECK FALLING SO I USED THE FAIRY DOLL SPELL.
I FIGURED I MIGHT BE ABLE TO LIVE ON AS A FAIRY EVEN IF MY BODY DIDN'T SURVIVE
MAKING MY BODY GLOW IS AN OPTIONAL PART OF THE SPELL THAT ALERTS OTHERS
TO IT BEING IN USE BUT IT USES UP ADDITIONAL ENERGY I DIDN'T THINK I HAD SO I
DIDN'T INCLUDE THE GLOWING PART OF THE SPELL



"While She Was Sleeping" • 2004 Dan Shive

"I WOULD'VE BEEN BACK
SOONER BUT WE LEFT THE
DOLL WE USED TO FIND THIS
PLACE IN THE CAR SO WE
COULD FIND OUR WAY BACK
TO IT THE SAME WAY AND
I RAN INTO THESE GUYS ON
THE WAY HERE "



ELLEN.
IF YOU
REALLY
DID
CATCH
ME
THEN
I OWE
YOU MY
LIFE



YOU DON'T OWE
ME ANYTHING!
SEEING YOU ALIVE
AND WELL IS
REWARD ENOUGH
FOR ME ANY DAY

INCIDENTALLY, WE GOT
CALLED OUT HERE AFTER
TEDD FINALLY GOT IN
CONTACT WITH HIS DAD
WHICH EXPLAINS WHY
WE SHOWED UP!



WHY DID YOU
SAY THAT?



IT FELT
NECESSARY
FOR SOME
REASON.



THIS DOESN'T LOOK TOO
SERIOUS AT FIRST GLANCE.
BUT WE'D BEST RUN SOME
TESTS JUST TO BE SAFE
I'LL BE BACK SOON WITH
A STRETCHER



I SUPPOSE THIS IS WHERE
WE SAY GOODBYE GRACE

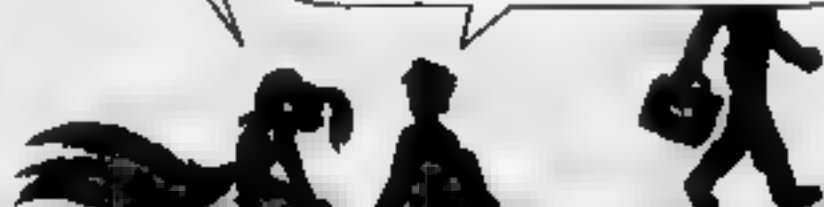
GOODBYE?



YES I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'D WANT TO COME WITH
ME OR NOT BUT THE THINGS I'M INVOLVED WITH NOW
TRYING TO MAKE AMENDS FOR THE PAST IT'S BEST FOR
YOU TO STAY WITH MR. VERRES

YOU KNEW I
WAS STAYING
WITH HIM?

I'VE STAYED IN CONTACT WITH MR.
VERRES OVER THE YEARS. WE BOTH
AGREED YOU SHOULD STAY WITH HIM
WHEN YOU SHOWED UP AT HIS HOUSE
AND I DOUBT THAT'S CHANGED

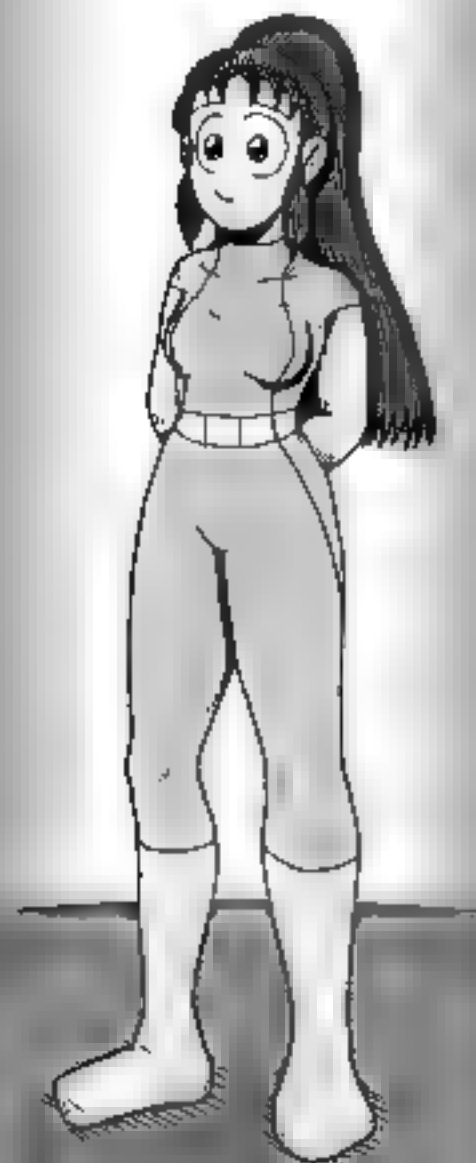


I WOULD HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH YOU PERSONALLY
IN SOME WAY BUT I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW THE
TRUTH ABOUT YOUR COMPLICATED FAMILY HISTORY I
DIDN'T WANT YOU TO THINK YOU WERE ANY LESS
SPECIAL AND UNIQUE THAN YOU REALLY ARE



STAY IN
TOUCH THIS TIME
GRANDPA





WHO ARE YOU, AND WHY ARE YOU SO HAPPY ABOUT BEING HUMAN?

I'M VLAD.

VLAD?!

I THINK THE BLAST FROM THAT GIRL TRANSFORMED ME

SNICKER

IS THIS FOR REAL?

YEP! REMEMBER WHAT THAT PURPLE KITTY LADY SAID? THAT'S HOW ELLEN SPREADS HER "CURSE"

VLAD YOU'RE ALIVE! THIS IS GREAT! NOW I DON'T HAVE TO AVENGE YOUR DEATH!

ZA?

HUG

"Sibling Foolishness" • 2004 Dan Shive

GET OFF OF ME! I DON'T LIKE BEING TOUCHED!

YEAH IT'S YOU ALRIGHT!

SMACK!

INVESTIGATIVE SNORT

NUDGE

WHAT DID I JUST SAY, PIG?!

SNICKER

BONK

LAUGH ALL YOU WANT. I'M STILL HUMAN.

BWA HA HEE
SNORT HA
HEE HEE HA
HAH *SNORT*

YOU SEEM
TO KNOW
ABOUT THIS.
AM I GOING
TO BE LIKE
THIS FOREVER?



YOU'RE LIKE ME SO
WHEN YOU GET TRANS-
FORMED. YOU SHOULD
STAY THAT WAY UNTIL
YOU CONCENTRATE
REALLY HARD TO
TRANSFORM AGAIN



GOOD. THEN
I CAN STAY THIS
WAY AND BE
HUMAN FOREVER



YOU ARE
AWARE YOU'RE
FEMALE AREN'T
YOU?



SO WHAT? I'M HUMAN NOW AND I'M
NOT RISKING DEATH SO I CAN BE MORE
SIMILAR TO THE WAY I WAS! I HATE
WHAT I WAS! I'VE NEVER BEEN A MAN
IN MY LIFE AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!



AND BESIDES DAMIEN'S DEAD. RIGHT?
WE WOULDN'T BE STANDING AROUND
PEACEFULLY WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE IF
HE WAS ALIVE HE'S NOT AROUND TO
BE DISAPPOINTED WITH WHAT I DO



"They Are Family" © 2004 Dan Shive

WE'VE DAWDLED HERE
LONG ENOUGH. IT IS
TIME TO LEAVE

AND WHERE ARE
WE SUPPOSED TO
LEAVE TO?

YOU THREE WILL BE
TAKEN INTO PROTECTIVE
CUSTODY GIVEN SOME
PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALU-
ATIONS AND, ASSUMING
YOU ARE OF SOUND
MINDS RELEASED
AS CITIZENS

WHY DO THEY
HAVE TO TAKE
TESTS? I NEVER
HAD TO TAKE ANY!

"Psychology" © 2004 Dan Shive

WE HAVE RECORDS
SUGGESTING YOU HAVE

I DON'T
REMEMBER ANY--
WAIT

HEY GRACE
WHAT DOES
THIS LOOK
LIKE TO YOU?

"STAR TREK"
OR
"STAR WARS"?

OH, HE IS
A SNEAKY
ONE

WHICH IS BETTER FOR DEBATING
DISCUSSION OR EXTREME VIOLENCE?

WE'RE GOING OUTSIDE.
SO GUINEAS WE NEED
YOU TO BE HUMAN

SQUEE?!



C MON. FURBALL YOU WERE
GOING TO HAVE TO TRANS-
FORM SOONER OR LATER
GIVEN OUR CURRENT
SITUATION.

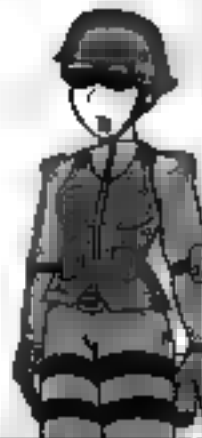
SQUEEK.



"More Gratuitous Humanity" © 2004 Dan Shive



"PHEW"





"Scenes Not Likely to be Repeated" © 2004 Dan Shive

HEY! I THINK
I HEAR A CAR IN
THE DRIVEWAY!



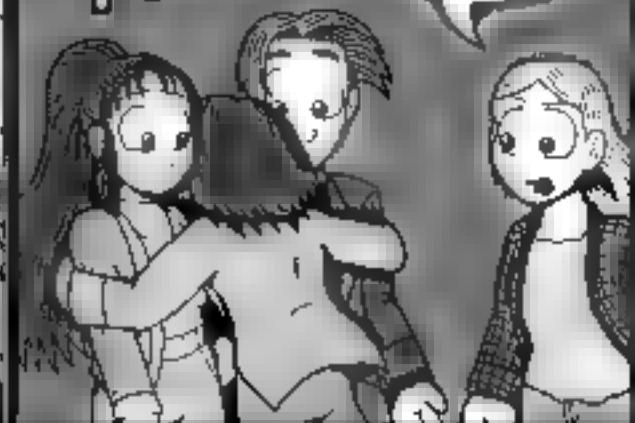
TEDD!

YOU'RE
BACK!



HUG

TEDD?!
LET ME HUG
ELLIOT!



TEDD?



NANASE? WE'RE
AT TEDD'S HOUSE

HM ?

JAGUAR SAID MY
UNCLE WANTS ME
TO STAY HERE
TONIGHT I'M
NOT SURE WHAT
HE TOLD MY
PARENTS

IT'S GOOD THAT YOU'RE SPENDING THE
NIGHT HERE YOU SHOULD BE FEELING
BETTER TOMORROW AND BEING WOBBLY
WILL BE ONE LESS THING TO EXPLAIN

ELLEN I
REALLY DON'T
FEEL WELL

DON'T WORRY
I'M GOING TO
HELP YOU INSIDE

I FIGURED YOU
WOULD, BUT
THERE'S SOME
THING ELSE

WHAT'S
TAKING ELLEN
AND NANASE?

THEY'LL BE ALONG
SOON ENOUGH

ELLIOT! IT'S GOOD
TO SEE YOU SAFE

I'M GLAD
YOU'RE NOT
DEAD.

WHO
THE HELL
IS THAT?

OH, SHUT IT

MR. VERRES, HALF-OVERJOYED THAT NOBODY HE CARED ABOUT WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED, HALF-ENRAGED OVER THEIR RECKLESSNESS. HALF-EXHAUSTED FROM A LONG NIGHT AND HALF-RELIEVED THE DAMIEN THREAT WAS GONE, GAVE A LONG AND CONFUSING LECTURE TO ALL PRESENT. NO ONE PRESENT KNEW FOR CERTAIN WHETHER THEY WERE BEING CHASTISED OR PRAISED.



THOUGH THEY WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO SPEND TIME WITH THEIR RECOVERED FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. DUE TO THE EXTREME LATENESS OF THE HOUR, THEY WOULD ALL NEED TO GO THEIR OWN SEPARATE WAYS. RATHER QUICKLY, ALL OF THEM HAD RATHER SHAKY EXCUSES FOR BEING OUT SO LATE. PARTICULARLY NANASE, AS SHE WOULD NEVER NORMALLY SPEND THE NIGHT AT TEDD'S HOUSE.



NANASE WAS TO TAKE TEDD'S BED FOR THE NIGHT, WHICH WOULD LEAVE TEDD TO SLEEP DOWNSTAIRS ON THE SOFA. TEDD HAD HIS OWN SUGGESTION INVOLVING THE SHARING OF GRACE'S BED, BUT THAT WAS PROMPTLY SHOT DOWN BY HIS FATHER. ELLEN HELPED NANASE TO TEDD'S BED AND LEFT NANASE ALONE FOR THE NIGHT.



OR SO IT SEEMED, AS ELLIOT WAS SURPRISED TO DISCOVER UPON RETURNING HOME.



"Divide
and Slumber"
© 2004 Dan Shave



YOU'RE SURE
YOUR BODY WILL
BE OK WITH YOU
OVER HERE AS
A FAIRY?

YES WITHOUT
THE GLOW, IT'S A
LOT LIKE I'M JUST
SLEEPING BESIDES
I WAS PROBABLY
GOING TO WIND
UP LYING AWAKE
MOST OF THE
NIGHT ANYWAY



SO ELLIOT I MISSED OUT ON YOUR
GIRLY TRANSFORMATION WHEN YOU
WENT BACK FROM BEING A CAT

YOU
FIGURED THAT
OUT?



WELL, YEAH NOW COME ON: I WANNA
SEE YOUR GIRLY TRANSFORMATION

WHAT?
WHY?
OK FINE

CAUSE I WANNA
SEE IT, AND I'M
GOING TO PESTER
YOU UNTIL I DO



THERE OK?
ARE YOU SATISFIED
NOW?



GAH!

MOMMY!



GET OFF
OF ME!

WHY DO YOU
REJECT ME, MOMMY?!

I'M NOT YOUR
MOMMY!

NO BUT I BET
YOU'RE TICKLISH!

HAHAHA
STOP THAT!

**"SENSORY
OVERLOAD"**

THWUMP



PAINTED BLACK SPECIAL FEATURES: A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK

SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING OF EGGS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PAINTED BLACK STORY ARC WAS BEING SET THIS DID NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT I HAD ANY IDEA WHAT I WAS DOING



DAMIEN'S MINIONS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS GRACE'S BROTHERS WERE ALSO FAIRLY GENERIC IN DESIGN I KNEW I WANTED SHAPE SHIFTERS TO MATCH GRACE BUT BEYOND THAT THEIR PERSONALITIES WERE GROSSLY UNDER DEVELOPED VLAD WAS THE MOST DEVELOPED OF GRACE'S BROTHERS AND THAT WAS DUE TO HIS SUPPOSED BLOOD-LUST ORIGINALLY ACTING AS THE SPARK FOR PAINTED BLACK



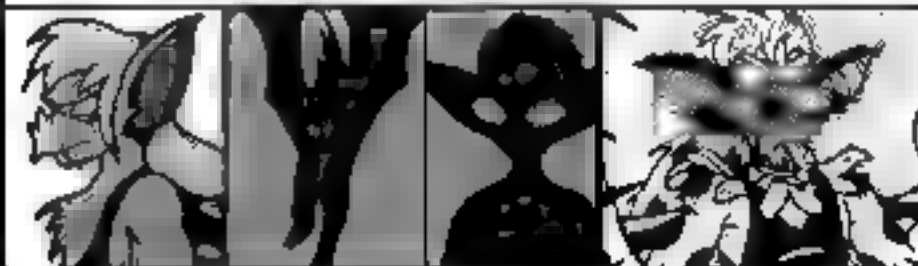
ALL I KNEW IN THE BEGINNING WAS THAT I WANTED SOME REALLY DANGEROUS VILLAINS AND I WANTED THEM TO BE CONNECTED WITH A SQUIRRELY CHICK BY THE NAME OF "SHADE TAIL" DAMIEN'S DESIGN WAS LITTLE MORE THAN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE "A REALLY POWERFUL EVIL GUY" HE WAS A GENERIC OVERPOWERED STEW OF EVIL AND I WAS BASING THE ENTIRE DIRECTION OF THE STRIP ON HIM AND HIS MINIONS



INSTEAD OF HEDGE, VLAD WAS TO BE LOOKING FOR GRACE, AND KILLING WHILE DOING SO FORCING GRACE OUT INTO THE OPEN WHILE THIS MAY SOUND "COOL" IT'S ONE OF THE MANY THINGS ABOUT THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR PAINTED BLACK THAT JUST DOESN'T FIT WITH EL GOONISH SHIVE



OUT OF ALL OF GRACE'S BROTHERS, VLAD CHANGED THE MOST BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. HIS ORIGINAL DESIGN CALLED FOR A TRULY EVIL VAMPIRE CHARACTER, WEAK PHYSICALLY BUT WITH DEADLY SKILL AND POWERS. I EVENTUALLY DECIDED THE BAT FORM WAS TOO GENERIC, AND I HAD ALWAYS INTENDED FOR HIM TO HAVE SOME BIRD DNA TO HELP EXPLAIN THE DIFFICULTY OF HIS TRANSFORMING. I MODIFIED VLAD'S FORM TO REFLECT THAT, GIVING VLAD A TRULY UNIQUE APPEARANCE.



VLAD'S MORAL COMPASS CHANGED A GREAT DEAL. HIS INITIAL EVIL NATURE GREW TO MORE OF A STATE OF UNREST BROUGHT ON BY BEING UNABLE TO BECOME HUMAN AND FIT IN. WHERE INITIALLY HE SIMPLY VIEWED DAMIEN AS A MASTER, HE WOULD GROW TO SEE HIS CAPTOR AS A SORT OF FATHER FIGURE, WHICH EXPLAINS THE MIXED FEELINGS EXPRESSED IN THE STORY COMIC FOR 06/18/2004.



I'VE ESSENTIALLY ABANDONED VLAD'S BLOODLUST, DISMISSING IT AS "TALKING BIG." VLAD WAS IN A POSITION TO CONFUSE FEAR WITH RESPECT, BOASTING ABOUT A DESIRE FOR BLOOD COULD GET THAT FEAR AND WOULD WORRY GRACE TO THE POINT OF GETTING VLAD TO PROMISE NOT TO KILL. WERE HE COMMITTED ENOUGH, HE COULD OF CONVINCED EVEN THE SCIENTISTS OF HIS HAVING A RAVENOUS THIRST FOR BLOOD.



VLAD'S FATE CHANGED A LOT AS WELL. THERE WERE SEVERAL VARIATIONS OF VLAD DYING, BOTH AS A VILLAIN AND AS A SACRIFICE TO SAVE GRACE. ONE ENDING HAD VLAD BECOME A FEMALE HUMAN, BUT DISAPPEARING ONLY TO LATER RETURN AS A VILLAIN WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BE REVEALED TO BE VLAD. I WOUND UP TAKING PITY ON VLAD, ALLOWING VLAD TO BECOME NON-VILLAINOUS HUMAN FEMALE.



DECIDING UPON A HEDGEHOG AND A GUINEA PIG FOR HEDGE AND GUINEAS, RESPECTIVELY, WAS NOT A DECISION BASED ON PLOT NECESSITY. I DECIDED ON A HEDGEHOG BECAUSE I THINK THEY'RE COOL ANIMALS. WHICH SHOULD BE EVIDENT FROM JEREMY'S DESIGN, AS JEREMY IS ESSENTIALLY A CAT WITH HEDGEHOG SPINES.



WHAT WOULD THE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF THESE TWO CHARACTERS BE? DARNED IF I KNEW! I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN I DECIDED TO MAKE IT SO GUINEAS NEVER SPOKE WORDS. BUT IT WAS A GOOD DECISION. IT ALSO EXPLAINS HOW HE COULD BE DEEMED TO BE SLOW WITTED WHEN HE IS ACTUALLY OF DECENT INTELLIGENCE. HEDGE'S PERSONALITY GREW FROM HIS SEARCH FOR GRACE AND MY NEED FOR HIM TO CAPTURE ELLIOT INSTEAD.



THE IDEA TO MAKE GUINEAS A GUINEA PIG WAS NOT MY OWN. I WANTED AT LEAST ONE MORE BROTHER FOR GRACE AND A FRIEND OF MINE WITH A PET GUINEA PIG REQUESTED I MAKE GRACE'S THIRD BROTHER ONE. I HAD NO REASON PLOT-WISE TO MAKE HIM A GUINEA PIG. BUT WHAT KIND OF HETEROSEXUAL TEENAGE BOY WOULD I HAVE BEEN TO SAY NO TO THE RANDOM REQUEST OF A TEENAGE GIRL? THUS GRACE'S THIRD BROTHER BECAME A PIGGY.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE DEAL IS WITH HEDGE OWLS. AND ANTI CLIMATIC MOMENTS BEYOND THE FACT THAT IT AMUSES ME. THE DECISION TO MAKE GUINEAS'S HUMAN FORM ATTRACTIVE WAS SIMPLY DUE TO IT BEING "AN OBVIOUS BUT FUNNY JOKE". I HAVE YET TO DECIDE IF WE'LL EVER GET TO SEE GUINEAS SPEAK AS A HUMAN. I CAN'T PICTURE HIM SAYING MUCH BEYOND "SQUEE" EVEN IF THAT'S NOT ACTUALLY A SOUND GUINEA PIGS MAKE.



DAMIEN. DAMIEN. DAMIEN ALL I KNEW WAS THAT I WANTED A POWERFUL EVIL VILLAIN. I DON'T KNOW WHY IT'S MUCH MORE FUN TO JUST HAVE GOOFY STORIES THAT FOCUS ON SILLINESS AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT A GOOD ANTAGONIST WHO'S NOT REALLY EVIL IS FAR BETTER SUITED FOR EL GOONISH SHIVE



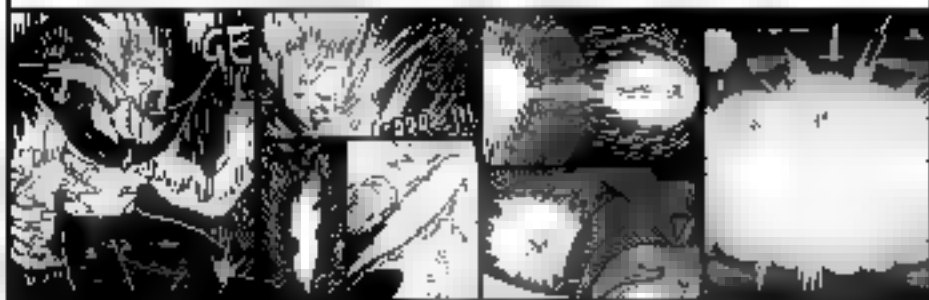
AS I DECIDED TO MAKE DAMIEN A FIRE FIEND FANCY WHITE CLOTHING BECAME LESS PRACTICAL, AND THE CROWN OF THORNS BECAME IMPOSSIBLE (NOT THAT IT EVER LOOKED THAT GOOD ON HIM). I WOUND UP GIVING HIM STRIPES AND FIREPROOF BLACK CLOTHES. AND DECIDED TO MAKE THE STRIPES BLACK ONES THAT WOULD GLOW BRIGHT WHITE AT TIMES. AT FIRST THE STRIPES WERE GOING TO BE CONSISTENTLY RED



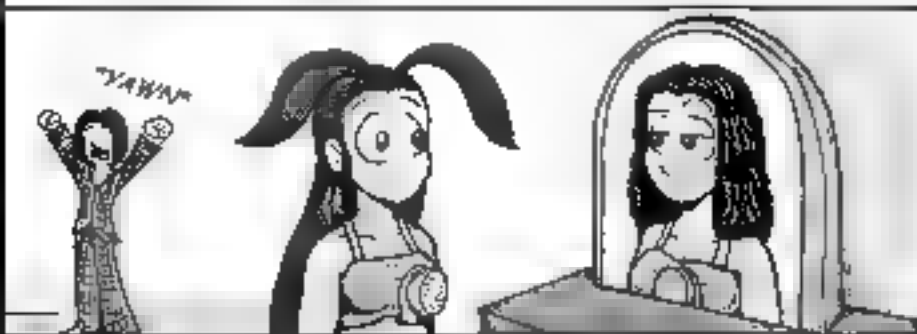
DAMIEN STARTED OUT IN A VAGUE SILHOUETTE I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE A DESIGN FOR HIS APPEARANCE YET I ACTUALLY WANTED HIM TO BE A VERY HANDSOME VILLAIN AT FIRST AND TO BE CONTRARY TO THE TYPICAL DARK LOOK OF VILLAINS. HIS DESIGN WAS ACTUALLY BASED ON ROMAN EMPERORS AT ONE POINT AND HIS COLORS WERE RED AND WHITE HE EVEN HAD A CROWN OF THORNS TO FURTHER DRIVE HOME HIS "I AM GOD" DEMENTIA



DAMIEN'S SELF-DESTRUCTION IS THE RESULT OF SEVERAL RE-WITES IN THE ORIGINAL VERSIONS DAMIEN WOULD ALWAYS GET AWAY LYING IN WAIT TO CAUSE MORE TROUBLE PROBLEM IS. I DON'T REALLY WANT TO DO ANOTHER *PAINTED BLACK* I INTEND TO DO MORE EPIC STORIES BUT DEVOTING MORE MONTHS TO THIS MONSTER? DAMIEN'S INFLUENCE WILL BE LONG LASTING BUT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO PIT GRACE UP AGAINST HIM AGAIN



GRACE WAS NOT ORIGINALLY GRACE. BUT THERE WAS A GRACE IN HER PLACE BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, A TIME WHEN I WAS JUST DOODLING EGGS STUFF AS OPPOSED TO POSTING IT ONLINE "GRACE" WAS THE TOKEN FEMALE COMPANION FOR SARAH THE ONLY THINGS THE EARLY VERSION OF GRACE HAD IN COMMON WITH THE CURRENT INCARNATION WAS AN INTEREST IN TEDD AND TRANSFORMATION



I DIDN'T HAVE GRACE'S PERSONALITY FLESHED OUT ALL TOO WELL IN THE BEGINNING HER ACCEPTANCE OF NUDITY IS ME BEING MERCIFUL AS NUDITY IS AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD FOR SHAPE SHIFTERS. I WOUND UP GOING THE CUTE AND NAÏVE ROUTE QUICKLY ABANDONING HER MEAN SQUIRREL DESIGN FOR A CUTE SQUIRREL DESIGN.



"PB Special Features The Tale of the Lady Graces"

WHEN I WAS MAKING OUT THE INITIAL SPOTTY PLOT FOR TAKING EGGS ONLINE (AKA "PAINTED BLACK"). I ESSENTIALLY HAD NO PLACE FOR THE ORIGINAL GRACE. AND STARTED DESIGNING A NEW CHARACTER "SHADE TAIL" (WHO WAS INITIALLY BLONDE FOR SOME REASON) WHEN IT CAME TIME TO GIVE SHADE TAIL A NON-CODE NAME I DECIDED TO COMBINE THE TWO CHARACTERS MAKING SHADE TAIL GRACE



NOW TO BLOW YOUR MINDS. I MYSELF DIDN'T REALIZE THIS AT FIRST BUT THE INITIAL VERSION OF GRACE? SHE ESSENTIALLY BECAME SUSAN GRANTED SUSAN IS A LITTLE MORE CYNICAL THAN THE ORIGINAL GRACE, BUT ADD IN FACTOIDS SUCH AS SHADE TAIL INITIALLY BEING BLONDE AND YOU WIND UP WITH SOME STRANGE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO VERY DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.



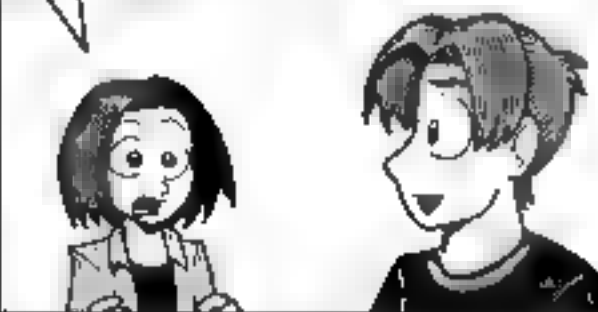
DAN'S ACTUALLY TAKING A VACATION.
HARD TO BELIEVE. ISN'T IT?

CARTOONISTS CAN TAKE
VACATIONS? I THOUGHT
THEY WERE SLAVE LABOR.



NO BUT THE PAY'S ABOUT THE SAME

WAIT, IF DAN'S ON VACATION.
THAT MEANS THERE WON'T BE
NEW STUFF ON THE SITE. WE'LL
LOSE ALL OF OUR READERSHIP
TO OTHER WEB-COMICS!



UM PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE
BETWEEN FREE-TO-READ WEB-COMICS
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO READ LIKE
5 000 OF THEM ON A DAILY BASIS

IT'S STILL NOT GOOD
TO HAVE NO NEW STUFF
FOR TWO WEEKS



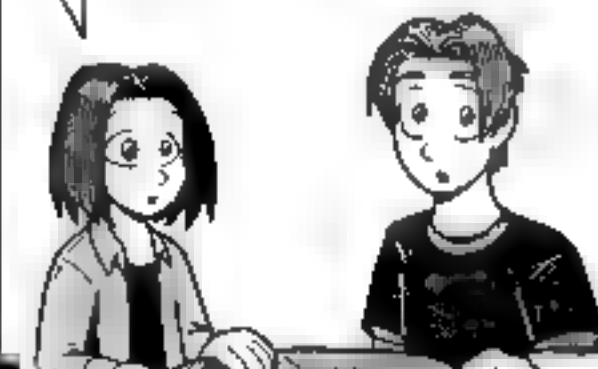
NOW
THAT I
AGREE
WITH

IT WOULD BE
NICE IF WE COULD
HAVE NEW COMICS UP
WITHOUT DAN HAVING
TO DRAW THEM



THERE
SHOULD BE
A WAY TO
MAKE THAT

YES. THERE
SHOULD WE'LL
NEED HELP



WE'LL HELP!





GUYS! I JUST
HEARD THE BANK'S
BEING ROBBED!



GATHER
THE OTHERS! THIS
LOOKS LIKE
A JOB FOR

THE TRANSFORMISTS!

FINALLY TO INTERPRET
INTO GOOD!



AMAZON

QUEEN HAMMER!

DOCTOR CHANGE!

SAILOR BOY!

UNREMARKABLE
GIRL

CHIMERA

BIG CAT!



TEOD?

TEDD!



COME ON,
WHERE'S THE
REMOTE? IT
BE ON TV!

UH
UH I
FORGET



GRACE © DAN SHIVE, ARTWORK © TIFFANY ROSS 2009

TEDD!!!!

What's in the bag? WHAT?

OOOOOOH! Can I have some? All of them?

Fresh roasted nuts. Delecticious.

I guess that if you REALLY want my nuts...

YES! I want them! I NEED them! GIMME!

OOOH. I see. So, your glasses are actually see-through, but they're foggy 99% of the time?

Shhh... Mind nappily away on Planet Bouncy.

SCRATCH

SCRATCH

FLEAS.
THE TRUE CURSE OF
TRANSFORMATIONS.

SCRATCH

SCRATCH

SCRATCH

EGS-CRFH-COTC



I'VE JOURNEYED LONG AND HARD TO FIND YOU, MY LORD NOSFERATINX!

IS THAT SO CHILD? WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE OF ME?



I WANT TO BECOME ELLEN WARRIOR HOTTIE! YOU HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM ME.

YES. YES I DO...



AND SO I SHALL!!



WOW, YOU DID IT! I'M ELLEN WARRIOR HOTTIE! WAIT TIL EVERYONE SEES ME..

YOU'RE ALSO A FAME VAMPIRE! YOU'LL NEED TO BECOME FAMOUS TO SURVIVE!



THERE IS ONE SIDE EFFECT HOWEVER.

HEY CUTIE! COME HERE OFTEN?

B-BRUNO??



WARRIOR HOTTIES TEND TO BECOME 'JERK MAGNETS' USELESS AND ANNOYING MEN WON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE!



WANNA GO FOR A DRINK, BABE? I--

GET AWAY FROM ME CREEP!!



OH GOD! YOUR POWERS MUST HAVE MIXED WITH MY OWN!



HOW 'BOUT SOME DOUBLE NAUGHTY HOTTIE ACTION MONEY? YOU'VE ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE FOR YOURSELF



HI ELLEN! YOU--

SNAPE!!!



WHOA! WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?? SHE'S MAD BECAUSE I RECOMMENDED SHE CHECK OUT BRUNO THE BANDIT..

THE SAME NIGHT AS PAINTED
BLACK



ELLIOT!
WHERE ARE
YOU?!



MEOW~!



ELLIOT!



GROWL!



PUNT!



PUNT! THWACK!
BOOM! KER-SLAP!

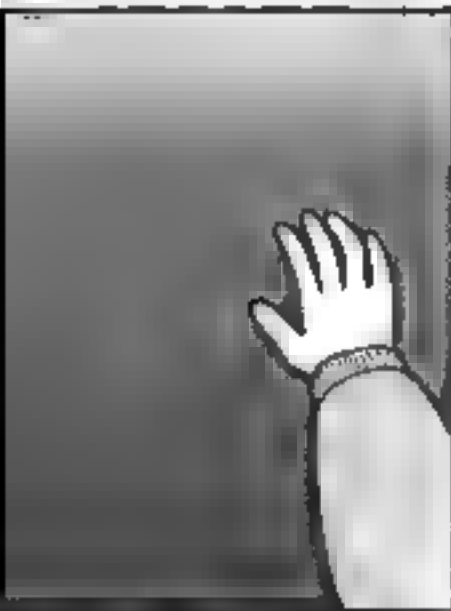
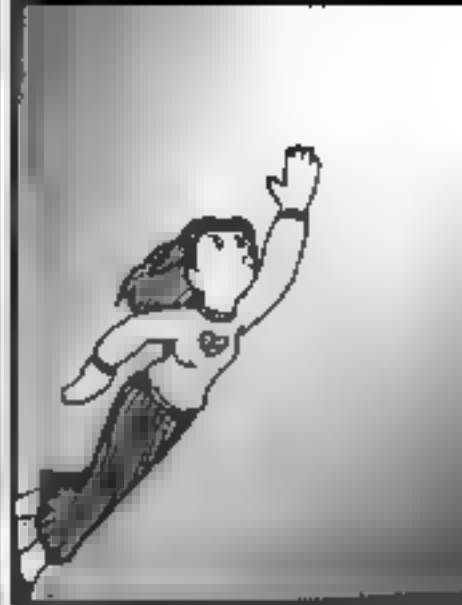
MEOW!

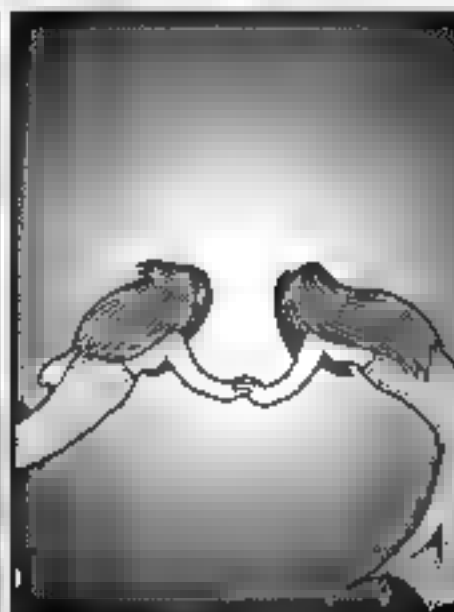
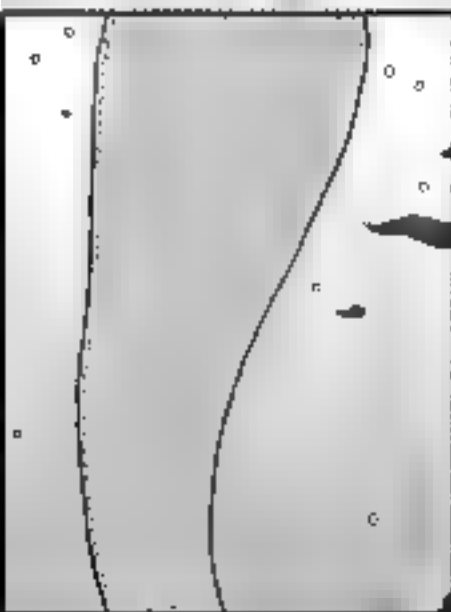
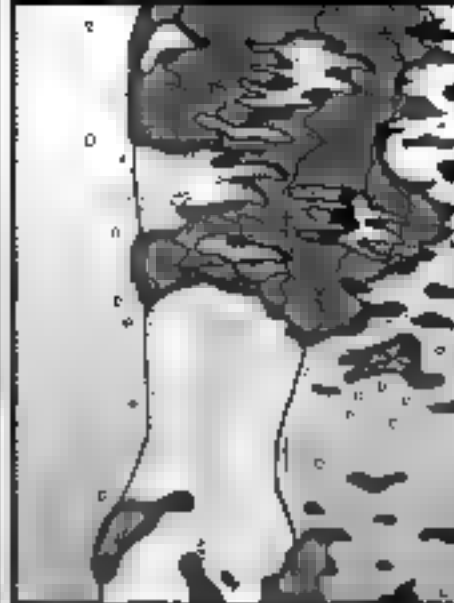
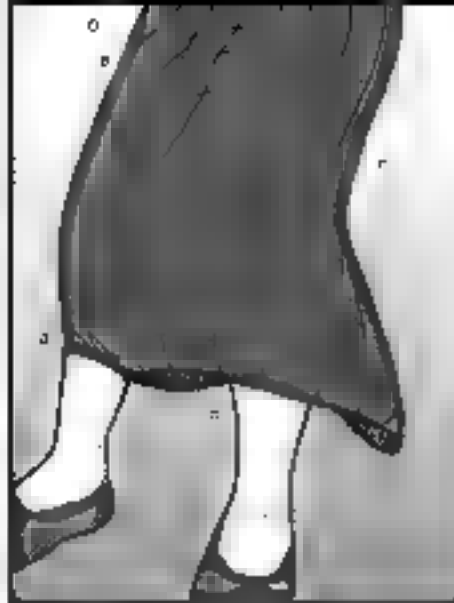
PURRRRRRR...



"Sleepy Time Sarah's Dream"

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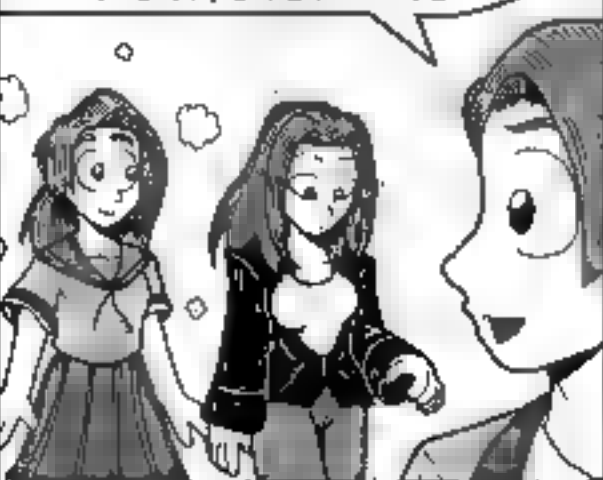
THIS DREAM'S GOING TO TAKE SOME REAL WORK TO FIX. WELL, WHEN MY FRIENDS ARE HAPPY, I'M HAPPY. SO FIRST THINGS FIRST



TEDD, STOP BEING MY WIFE, AND BE HAPPY WITH GRACE



ELLEN STOP BEING MY DAUGHTER AND DATE SOMEONE I WOULD APPROVE OF, LIKE NANASE!



NOW, ASSUMING I HAVE TIME FOR IT BEFORE I WAKE UP I NEED TO FIND A SUITABLE GUY FOR JUSTIN AND TURN SUSAN INTO A GUY. MAYBE ONE CAN SOLVE THE OTHER, BUT FOR NOW



I'VE GOT A BANK TO SAVE AS--
SUPER ELLIOT!



SOON

THANKS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW SUPER ELLIOT!

THINK NOTHING OF IT, REPORTER GIRLFRIEND SARAH!







SO HOW IS YOUR
SISTER DOING?



SHE'LL HAVE
TO WEAR A
CAST ON HER
LEG FOR A
WHILE BUT
SHE'LL BE OK
SHE'S LUCKY
GIVEN THE
ACCIDENT



BUT ENOUGH OF THAT DREADFUL
BUSINESS I WANT TO SEE MY
DAUGHTER! TIFFANY? MOMMY'S
HOME AND SHE WANTS A HUG!



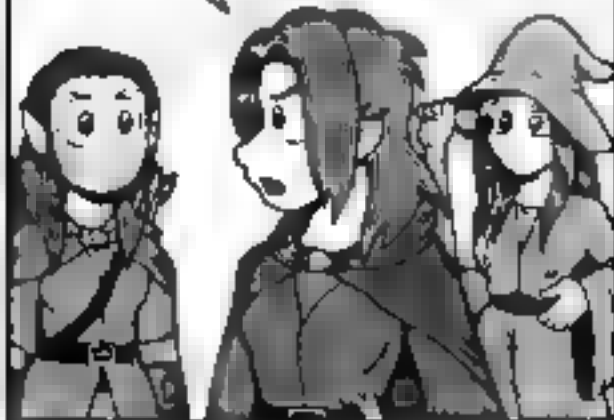
TIFFANY ?



HE HAD A
WOMAN OVER



ALRIGHT, FELLOWSHIP! IT'S
TIME TO GO RESCUE ELLIOT
FROM CERTAIN DOOM!



WAIT!
I'M
COMING
WITH
YOU

OH NO YOU'RE NOT,
JUSTIN! YOU'D ONLY
BE IN THE WAY!

BUT--

LOOK HALFLING IF WE FIND A
RING THAT NEEDS BEARING WE'LL
CALL YOU, BUT YOU'RE DEAD
WEIGHT IN THIS SCENARIO!



BESIDES THAT WHO DO YOU
THINK ELLIOT WOULD RATHER
HAVE SAVE HIM?

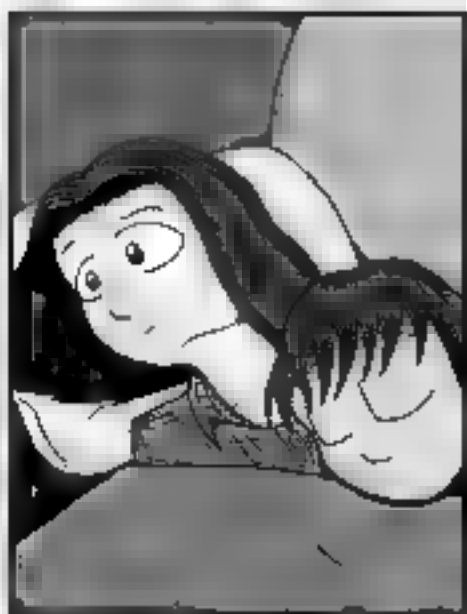
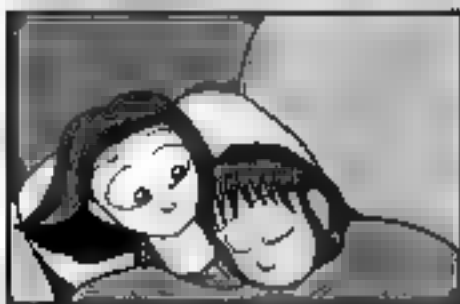


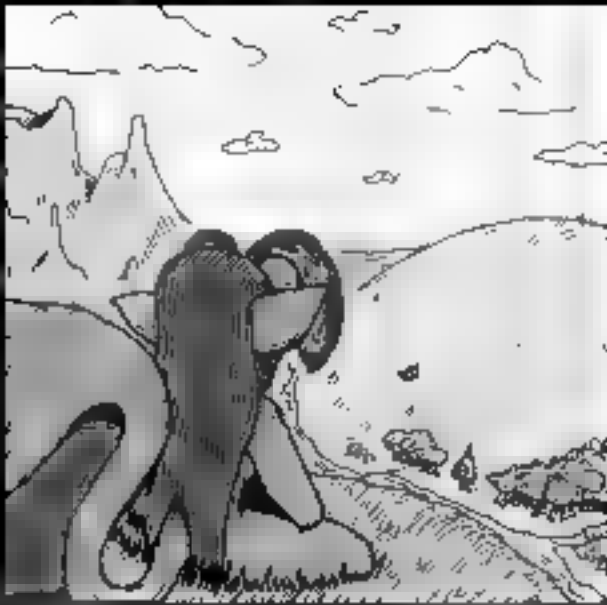
WE'LL HANDLE EVERYTHING GO
BACK TO TRIVIAL THINGS AND
WE'LL BRING ELLIOT HOME SAFELY
WITHOUT YOU







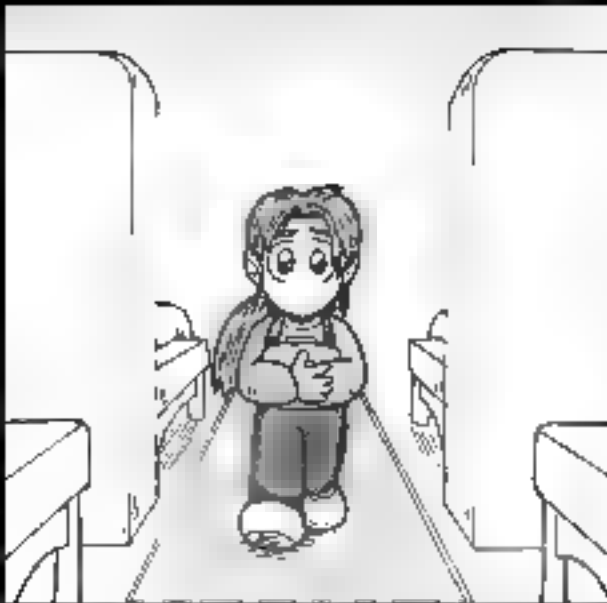














THAT KID'S
ALL ALONE



JUST LIKE I
WAS, BEFORE
KAOLI WAS
NICE TO ME



HEY KID!



WHY DON'T YOU PLAY
KICKBALL WITH US? IT'S
FUN, AND YOU CAN PLAY
IF YOU WANT!



HM?

UM



I I I AM NO GOOD



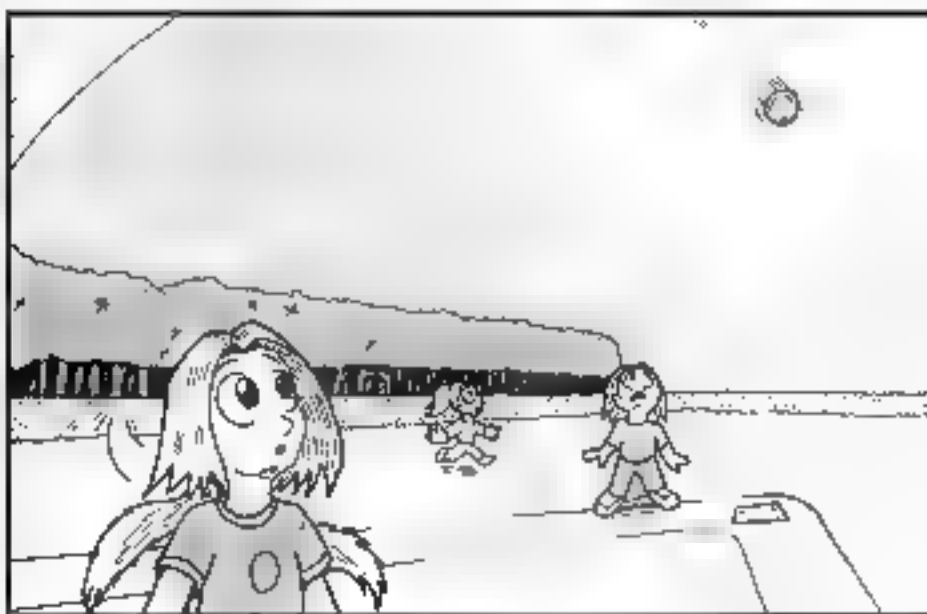
WELL, YOU'RE NOT GONNA
GET ANY BETTER BY *SITTING*
HERE! COME ON!

H-HEY !!!



"Second Life You Will Play! You Will Play NOW!"

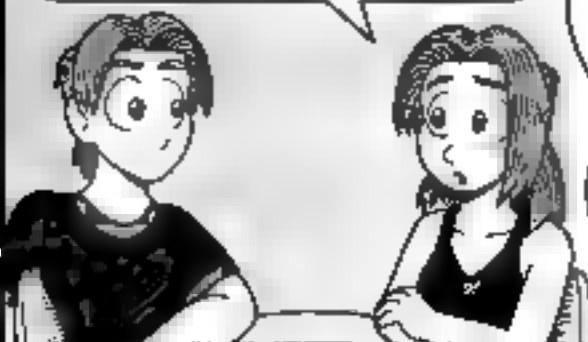
© 2004 Dan Shive







IT WAS LIKE I WAS GOING THROUGH THE FIRST SIX YEARS OF MY LIFE AS IT WOULD BE IF I HAD BEEN BORN NATURALLY. I HAD NO MEMORY OF ANYTHING FROM THIS LIFE DURING IT, AND YOU WEREN'T THERE AT ALL.



NOW I REMEMBER THOSE FIRST SIX YEARS OF MY LIFE MORE CLEARLY THAN I REMEMBER YOURS! I STILL REMEMBER SOME STUFF FROM YOUR EARLY CHILDHOOD BUT THE SIX YEARS I GOT LAST NIGHT SEEM MORE REAL TO ME!

THAT S MESSED UP

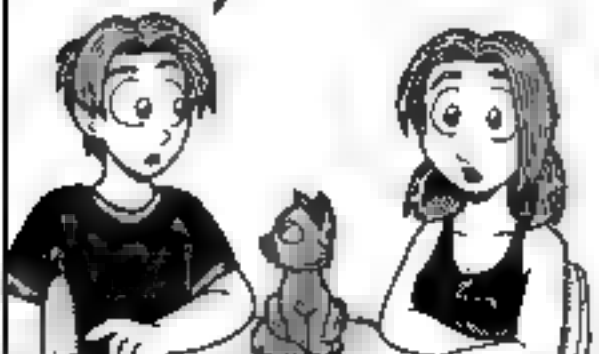


MORE SO THAN YOU KNOW! I REMEMBER STUFF FROM WHEN I WAS AN INFANT NOW! I KNOW WE GOT A "C" IN PSYCHOLOGY BUT IT'S NOT NORMAL TO REMEMBER STUFF VIVIDLY FROM BEFORE THE AGE OF FOUR IS IT?



YEAH, BUT WE DIDN'T GET THAT FROM PSYCH CLASS WE GOT THAT FROM SOME COP SHOW

OH YEAH THAT WAS A GOOD EPISODE



I THINK THEY HAVE RERUNS OF THAT SHOW ON AT 9:00 TONIGHT, ACTUALLY WOULDN'T IT BE FREAKY IF THEY SHOWED THAT EPISODE TONIGHT?

OH YES MANY TIMES MORE FREAKY THAN YOU LIVING OUT A SECOND LIFE WHILE YOU SLEEP



I DIDN'T RUN INTO SARAH AT ALL DURING THE DREAM BUT I DID RUN INTO TEDD AND NIOI

SO THAT'S WHY YOU SAID "██████████"

MUNCH



RIGHT I DON'T DOUBT THAT THAT LITTLE NOSE BEEP OF HERS IS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THIS



WHAT'S WEIRD IS THAT SHE WAS AS YOUNG AS ME IN THE DREAM HAD MORE PINKISH SKIN STRIPES AND FUR AND CALLED HERSELF "KAOLI"



MAYBE SHE WASN'T NIOI EVEN IF SHE WAS. THIS WAS JUST A DREAM, WASN'T IT? NONE OF THEM WERE ACTUALLY THERE. RIGHT?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT BASED ON WHAT SHE SAID BEFORE SHE BEEPED ME, I'M GONNA HAVE MORE OF THESE DREAMS UNTIL I'VE AT LEAST REACHED THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN IN THEM. SEEING AS MOM AND DAD SEEM TO BE ACTING NORMAL, I ALSO FIGURE THAT THE PEOPLE HERE AND MOST OF THOSE IN MY DREAMS OTHER THAN MYSELF ARE SEPARATE



REGARDLESS OF THAT I HAVE TO GO TAKE CARE OF SOMETHING







DAMIEN
IS DEAD

DAMIEN WAS KILLED IN
BATTLE LAST NIGHT I WISH I COULD SAY
IT WAS I WHO KILLED HIM. BUT SOMEONE ELSE
HAS TAKEN THE HONOR.



I'VE TRAINED FOR YEARS WITH THE
INTENT OF AVENGING YOU BUT I
WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE THE MONSTER
I BELIEVE I COULD HAVE DEFEATED HIM
HAD I BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY

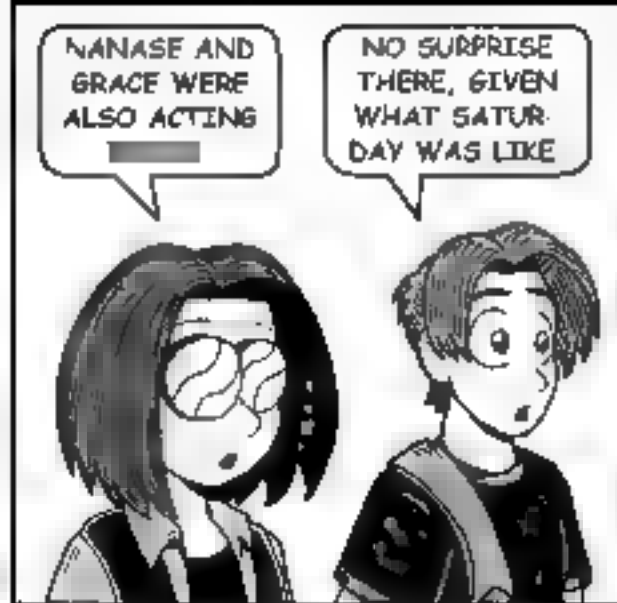


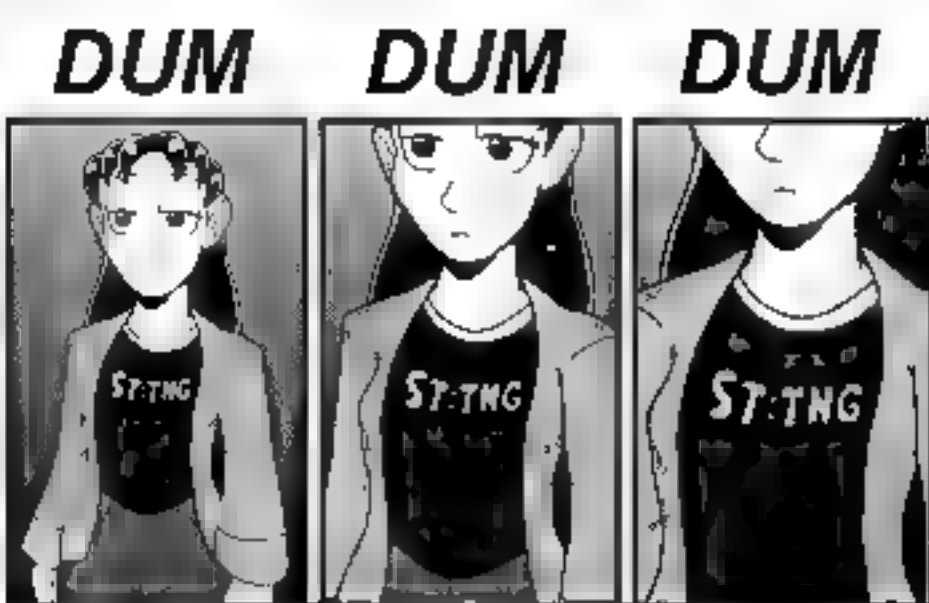
NONETHELESS I HAVE FAILED. MY
ONLY COMFORT IS THAT YOU HAVE
BEEN AVENGED IN SPITE OF MY
INCOMPETENCE I HOPE TO REDEEM
MYSELF BY GIVING PROPER TRIBUTE
TO SHE WHO KILLED DAMIEN

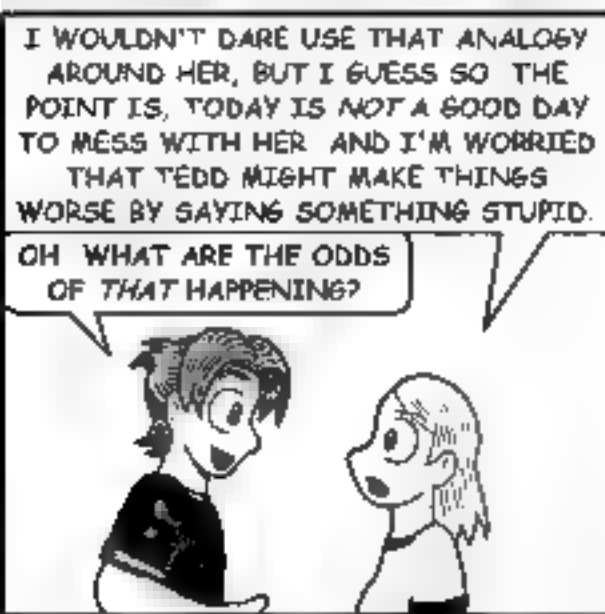


I PROMISE YOU THAT I WILL FIND
HER THOUGH IT MAY TAKE A GREAT
DEAL OF TIME AS I HAVE LITTLE TO
GO ON I ONLY KNOW THAT SHE IS
A FEMALE SEYUNOLU WHO IS PART
SQUIRREL AND THAT SHE IS A
WOMAN OF GRACE









WOW YOU AND "STAR TREK"
I NEVER WOULD VE GUESSED!
IT'S LIKE ONE OF THOSE
DIRTY SECRET AFFAIRS
THAT YOU NEVER WOULD VE
THOUGHT POSSIBLE



YOU ARE AWARE THAT
PICARD WAS SUPPOSED TO
BE FRENCH RIGHT? WHY
DID HE HAVE A BRITISH
ACCENT? DOESN'T THAT
JUST RUIN EVERYTHING?



EH I SUPPOSE IT MAKES
SENSE THAT YOU WOULD
LIKE "STAR TREK" YOU VE
GOT THOSE VULCAN-LIKE
EARS. AFTER ALL



UM SUSAN?
THIS ISN'T ANY
FUN IF YOU DON'T
SASS-BACK



STUDENTS FIGHTING TRANS-
GENDER MAYHEM. WRECKED HALL-
WAYS HAIRPIECE SNATCHINGS



THERE THERE WAS A TIME A
TIME WHEN THE MAJESTY OF MURALS
WAS ENOUGH TO KEEP STUDENTS ON
THE RIGHT PATH BUT NOW NOW
I JUST DON T KNOW ANYMORE

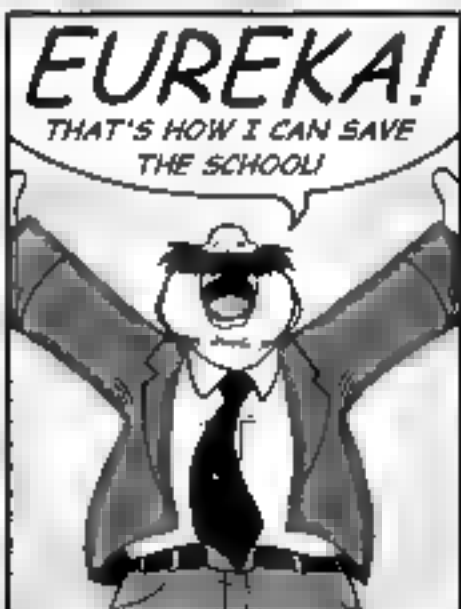


WHAT IN
THE WORLD ?



SLAPPITY
SLAPPITY
SLAPPITY
SLAPPITY





ALRIGHT SUSAN
SO WHAT'S THE
DEAL? WHY'D
YOU START
SLAPPING ME?



ARE YOU DENSE? I
YOU WERE MAKING
FUN OF ME!

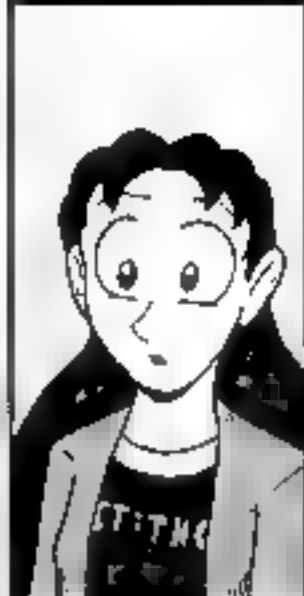
WELL, YEAH BUT I THOUGHT
TEASING EACH OTHER WAS
THE ENTIRE BASIS FOR OUR
FRIENDSHIP!



OUR--WAIT WHAT? NO! THE
ENTIRE BASIS FOR OUR
"FRIENDSHIP" IS SITTING
WITH SARAH AND
ELLIOT AT
LUNCH!



WELL, YEAH IT WAS BUT
I THOUGHT WE'D GROWN
BEYOND JUST THAT



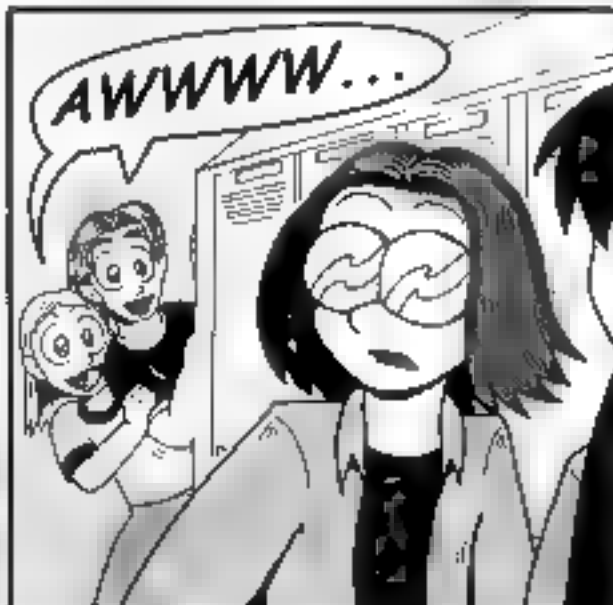
PERHAPS WE HAVE
BUT I'VE BEEN
PREOCCUPIED
WITH THOUGHTS
OF MY FATHER
THE LAST COUPLE
OF DAYS



I DON'T NEED
A FRIEND WHO
MAKES FUN OF ME
RIGHT NOW



THEN FOR THE
TIME BEING I'LL JUST
BE A FRIEND WHO
SUPPORTS YOU



AWWWWW...

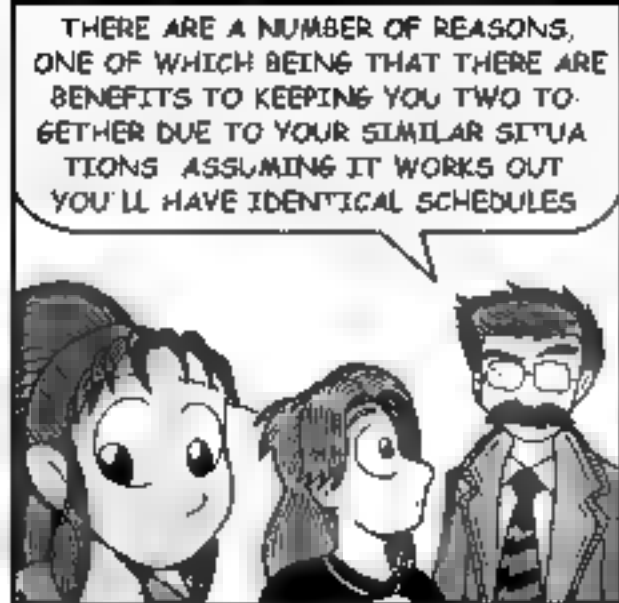
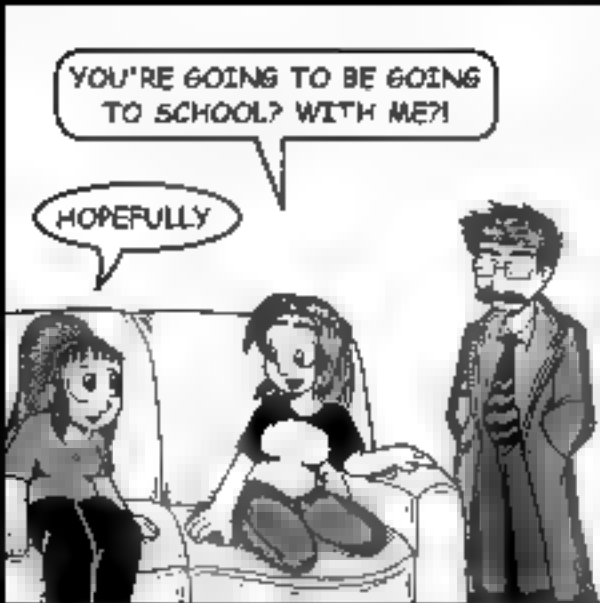
YOU CAN START BY HELPING
ME KILL THOSE TWO



I'M
ON IT









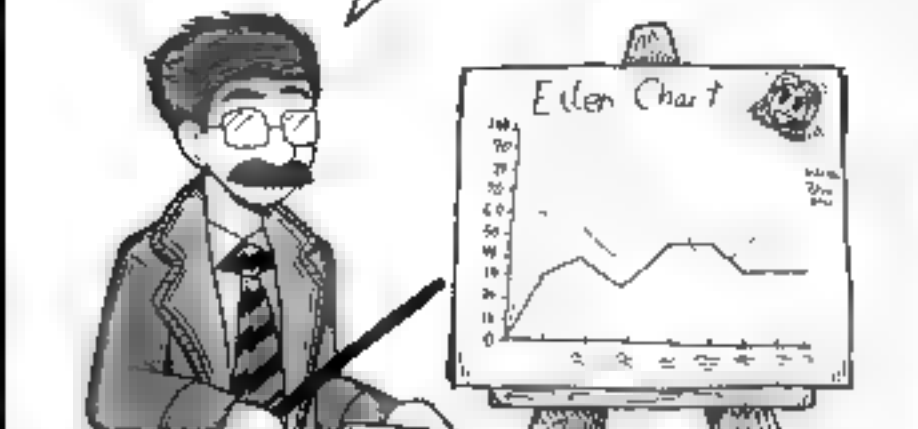
AS THIS CHART CLEARLY ILLUSTRATES, ELLIOT HAS A TENDENCY TO BE TEDD'S "VOICE OF REASON" IN SPITE OF RECENT EVENTS. HE GENERALLY REDUCES IMPULSIVE TEDD BEHAVIOR. THAT AND HE'S A TERRIBLE LIAR, SO I LL BE ABLE TO TELL IF HE'S HIDING ANYTHING WHEN I GET BACK



BUT WHY ELLIOT AND NOT ME? WE'RE KINDA SIMILAR, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED



WELL, AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THIS CHART YOU HAVE ALMOST THE SAME INFLUENCE ON TEDD EXCEPT THAT EVIDENCE SUGGESTS YOU'RE MORE IMPULSIVE THAN ELLIOT



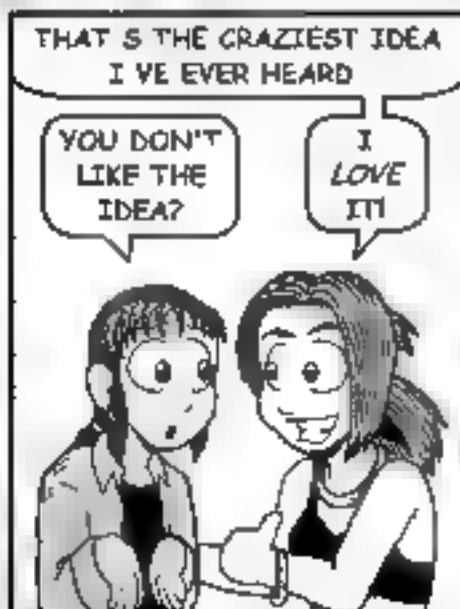
THE CLINCHER HOWEVER, WAS THAT CRAZED LOOK YOU GOT ON YOUR FACE WHEN I FIRST SUGGESTED THE PARTY

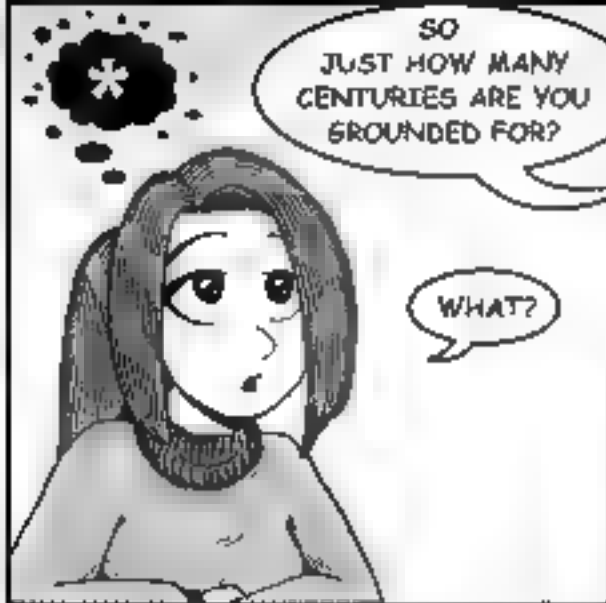
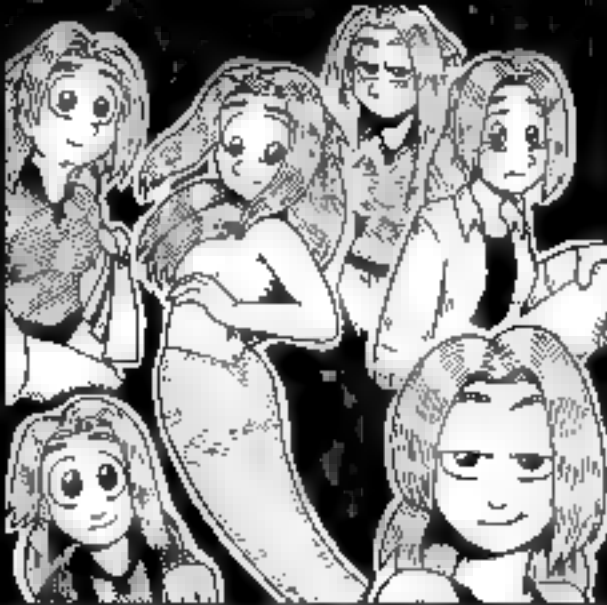


THAT CRAZED LOOK COULD HAVE MEANT ANY NUMBER OF THINGS!

THAT DOESN'T HELP YOUR CASE







ANYWAY, I'M NOT IN TROUBLE, SO I'LL BE ABLE TO KEEP YOU COMPANY WHILE YOU'RE WORKING TODAY.



AH YES, THE DREADED THREE AND A HALF HOUR SHIFT AT THE COMIC SHOP. HOW I SURVIVE SUCH ARDUOUS HOURS IS A MYSTERY FOR THE AGES!



ELLEN TOLD ME SHE MIGHT STOP BY AT SOME POINT.*



*SEE EGS:NP - "MAGIC COMIC SHOP" & "NOT A DATE AT THE MALL"

SO, DID YOU GET ANYTHING AT THE BOOKSTORE YESTERDAY?

UM, YES...



...SO? WHAT'D YOU GET?

UM...



ER...



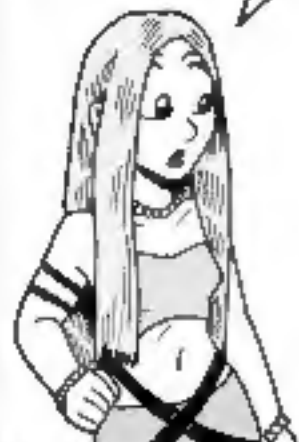
HELLO, NANASE.



DIANE!



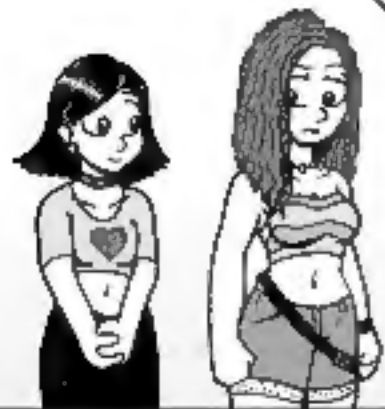
YOU KNOW, FOR SOMEONE WHO CLAIMS TO HATE ME, YOU SEEM RATHER HAPPY TO SEE ME.



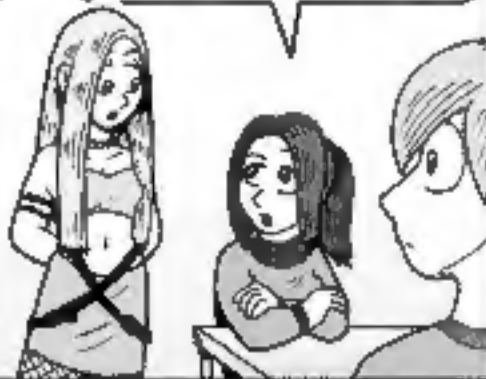
CONVENIENT TIMING, I ASSURE YOU.



NANASE, ONCE AGAIN I'D LIKE TO OFFER YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT WITH MYSELF, LUCY, AND RHODA.



SORRY DIANE, BUT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN LURING BOYS OVER TO YOUR TABLE SO YOU CAN MANIPULATE THEM INTO SPENDING MONEY ON YOU.



YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO MISS THE POINT THAT THEY'D ALSO BUY YOU THINGS.



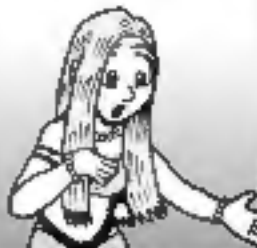
AND YOU NEVER SEEM TO REALIZE THAT I DON'T WANT TO CHEAT GUYS OUT OF THEIR MONEY.



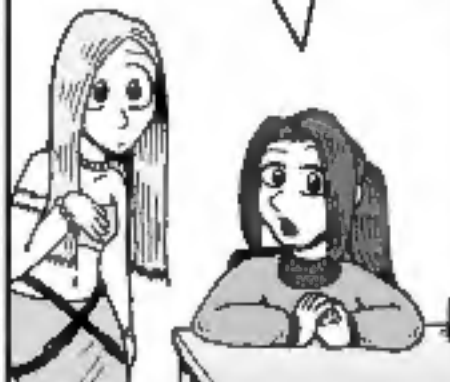
WE NEVER CHEAT BOYS OUT OF THEIR MONEY! THEY HANG OUT WITH US AND WILLINGLY BUY US THINGS!



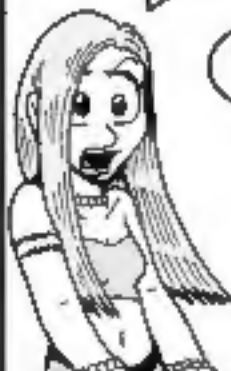
I'M ASKING YOU TO BE OUR FRIEND, AND I RESENT YOU MAKING THAT SOUND LIKE IT'S A BAD THING!



...FINE. IF YOU LET JUSTIN SIT WITH US, AND IF HE'S OK WITH IT, I'LL GIVE SITTING WITH YOU AT LUNCH A SHOT.



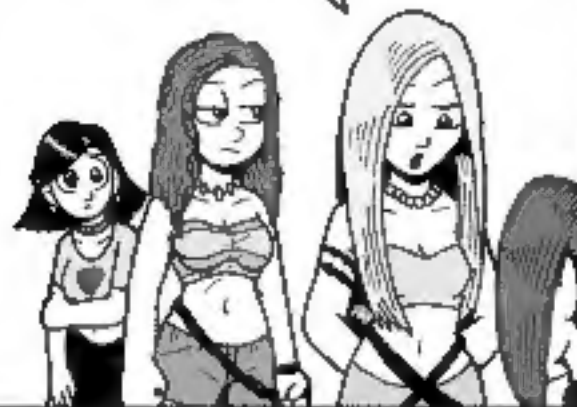
BUT... BUT HE'S GAY! HE WON'T BUY US STUFF, AND HE'LL SCARE AWAY GUYS WHO WOULD!



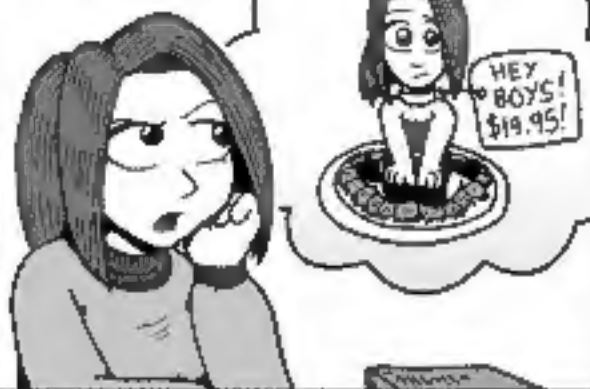
BUH-BYE NOW.



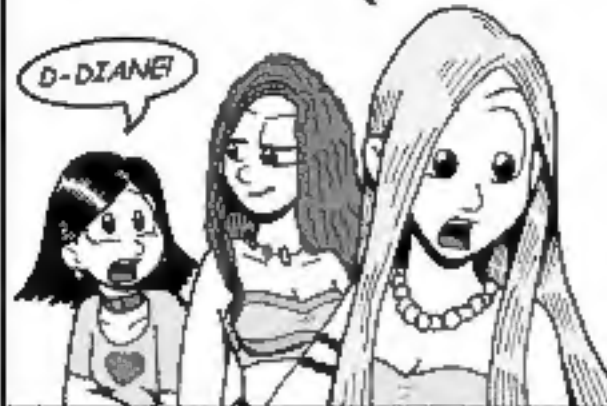
NANASE, YOU SHOULD TAKE THIS AS A COMPLIMENT. WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO SIT WITH US IF WE DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GOOD LOOKING!



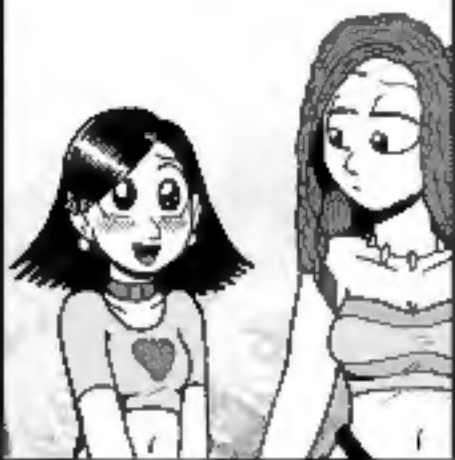
HOW FLATTERING THAT YOU THINK OF ME AS A PIECE OF MEAT...



YOU'D BE MORE THAN THAT! IT'S NOT LIKE WE GOT RID OF RHODA AFTER SHE GAINED WEIGHT!



RHODA, DON'T LISTEN TO HER. YOU LOOK FINE.



WHAT'S WITH THAT STUPID LOOK ON YOUR FACE?



SIGH I GIVE UP. HAVE FUN WITH YOUR DEFECTIVE MALE COMPANION, NANASE.



DID YOU SEE THAT, NOAH? THOSE MOOCHER GIRLS WERE JUST AT JUSTIN'S TABLE! I BET THEY WERE TRYING TO GET HIS HARD-EARNED COMIC BOOK MONEY! THOSE SLEAZY HUSSIES! HOW DARE THEY HARASS POOR JUSTIN!



I DID NOT GIVE THE MATTER MUCH MIND, MELISSA, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE THEY WERE SPEAKING WITH THAT NANASE GIRL, AND NOT JUSTIN HIMSELF.



GIRLS HITTING ON GIRLS? AS TRENDY AS THAT WOULD BE, I KIND OF DOUBT IT.



I DO NOT THINK THEY WERE FLIRTING WITH NANASE. THIS JUDGMENT MAY BE UNFAIR, BUT FROM WHAT LITTLE I KNOW OF THOSE THREE, I SUSPECT THEY WERE PROPOSING A TAINTED FRIENDSHIP IN THE HOPES OF INFLATING THEIR SOCIAL STATUS, MOST LIKELY CHOOSING NANASE DUE TO HER NOT ONLY BEING EVIDENTLY ATTRACTIVE AND A LITTLE MYSTERIOUS, BUT ALSO PROBABLY DUE TO THE STUBBORNNESS OF THEIR LEADER WHO MOST LIKELY DOES NOT LIKE TO TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER.



THAT WAS TOO COMPLICATED. I'M JUST GONNA GO WITH THAT "FLIRTING WITH JUSTIN" THEORY.

YOU DO WHAT YOU MUST.

